

القرآن الكريم  
وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ نُوْحًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَحَدِيثٌ خَلْقِي

THE  
**ASCENDANT QUR'AN**  
*Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture*

VOLUME 13  
Al-A'raf: 1-93



Muhammad H. al-'Āṣī





In the Name of Allah,  
the Mercy-Giving, the Merciful





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**ASCENDANT QUR'AN**

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*Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture*

VOLUME 13

Al-A'rāf:1–93

Muḥammad H. al-Āṣī

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT

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Allah (ﷻ) says in His noble Book,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

“Verily, Allah and His Angels send salutations on the Apostle.  
O You who are firmly committed [to Allah], you too [must]  
send the most worthy salutations and blessings upon him.”  
(Sūrah al-Aḥzāb:56)

In launching this *tafsīr*, we beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless His final Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ), all the Prophets (ﷺ) who preceded him, and all those who, despite great difficulty and sacrifice, sincerely follow in their footsteps from the *ṣāliḥūn*, the *ṣiddiqūn*, the *shuhadā'*, and the *marḥūmūn*. We also beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless and amply reward those who have helped in the publication of this *tafsīr* in whatever capacity.

— The Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought



# Table of Contents

## Volume 13

<b>Publisher's Foreword</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
Endnotes .....	xix
<b>List of Honorifics</b> .....	<b>xxi</b>
<b>Transliteration Chart</b> .....	<b>xxiii</b>
Consonants .....	xxiii
Vowels and Diphthongs .....	xxiv
<i>Tanwīn</i> and <i>Tashdīd</i> .....	xxiv
<b>Sūrah al-A'rāf, Part 1</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Contextual Overview .....	2
The Qur'an Came to Challenge the Status Quo .....	6
Those Who Follow the Prophet Cannot Yield to Kings .....	14

Satan and Man's Intellectual Confusion .....	18
Evolutionism and Creationism:	
Two Sides of the Same Coin .....	25
What Is Known with Certainty about the Angels .....	48
Fact and Fiction about the Jinn .....	62
The Origin of Nationalism and Racism .....	74
The Language of Man Fighting Man	
Is Attributable to Iblīs .....	105
How Satan Capitalized on the Duality	
of Human Nature .....	124
The Original Sin and Other Human Contrivances .....	132
Beauty Is an Accessory of <i>Taqwá</i> .....	136
Secular Confusion over the Meaning	
of Obscenity and Morality .....	144
The Reference Point for Attire, Modesty, and Beauty ....	158
And Eat and Drink, but Not to Excess... ..	162
Modalities of the Non-Scriptural Culture .....	170
The Lords of Fashion-cum-Fornication .....	178
Paradise and Hell Are Not Metaphors .....	188
Worldly Power Diminishes in the	
Presence of Divine Power .....	195
God Decides the Proportion of His	
Justice and Mercy .....	204
Man Is Not to Corrupt God's World Order .....	208
The Vastness of the Universe Created by God .....	214
The Etiquette of <i>Du'á'</i> .....	220

The Wind and the Rain Allude to God's Grace Upon Man . . . . .	224
Prophets Are the Consummate Agents of Change . . . . .	232
Nūḥ (ﷺ) Persevered for Close to a Thousand Years . . . . .	251
Hūd's (ﷺ) Warnings to 'Ād Go Unheeded . . . . .	263
Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ), the She-Camel, and Thamūd . . . . .	272
Story of Lūṭ (ﷺ) Demonstrates Homosexuality Is a Malignance . . . . .	279
Shu'ayb (ﷺ), the Prophet of Economics . . . . .	309
Endnotes . . . . .	336
 Glossary . . . . .	 365
 General Index . . . . .	 383
 Index of Arabic Words . . . . .	 405
 Notes . . . . .	 409





## Publisher's Foreword

From its contents we can discern that *Sūrah al-A'raf*, like the *sūrah* preceding it, was revealed in Makkah. The time period of revelation also appears to be the same: near the end of the Prophet's mission in Makkah and in preparation for the Hijrah to Madinah. This is apparent from the reference to the Children of Israel and their argumentative behavior vis-à-vis Mūsá (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims with him were about to encounter Banū Isrā'īl, for the first time as an organized opposition, upon their arrival in Madinah.

Throughout the noble Qur'an, Allah's Oneness (*tawhīd*), power, and authority are constantly emphasized. He is the Creator and He is the lawgiver and only He knows what is best for His creation. This applies both to individual personal conduct as well as collective or communal existence. That is why the Qur'an explains rules for personal hygiene as well as for social interaction leading to institutional development in society, such as the adjudication of justice, the prosecution of war and managing its aftermath, the systemic distribution of wealth, and the deliberative mechanism to reach decisions on behalf of the Ummah. Man can elect not to follow divine guidance — that is a choice Allah (ﷻ) has given to

man and jinn — but, as in all things that are understood through experience and reflection thereafter, there are consequences for making the wrong choices or for settling for less than the best choice. The cooperative and corresponding (social) domain is where man can expect to most advantageously leverage Allah’s will to manage his affair on earth. Societies that habitually and recklessly violate Allah’s commands are setting themselves up for His corrective justice both in this *dunyā* and more particularly in the *ākhirah*. Societies that claim to be Islamic but do not adhere to Allah’s prescriptive standards are not immune to the damaging aftereffects of secular laws that are not only un-Islamic, but often anti-Islamic. And this is especially evident today in the majority Muslim world.

Given this grim reality, it is imperative that the message of the Qur’an be understood properly to determine where we, the committed Muslims, stand vis-à-vis Allah’s command and counsel. That is what this *tafsīr*, *The Ascendant Qur’an: Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture* by Imam Muḥammad al-‘Āṣī does. It helps us apply the Qur’anic injunctions and evaluate our proximity to them. Based on these guidelines, let us briefly consider the major themes highlighted in *Sūrah al-A‘raf*, the seventh *sūrah* in the noble Qur’an.

An important issue in the beginning of the *sūrah* is that Adam (ﷺ) is the father of all people. When he was created, Allah (ﷻ) ordered the angels to prostrate themselves to him. By prostrating, the angels were not deifying Adam, rather they were demonstrating reverence to Allah’s designated *khalīfah* (deputy, vicegerent) on earth. The angels complied but Iblīs refused. When asked why he disobeyed Allah’s command, Iblīs said, **“I am better than he: You have created me out of fire, whereas him You have created out of clay” (7:12)**. By refusing to obey Allah’s command and then arrogantly rationalizing it with an excuse, Iblīs became the first racist and Islamophobe. Racism has continued to plague humanity ever since, with devastating consequences. Allah wanted to expose Iblīs’ racism and warn man right at the time of creation that Iblīs (later to become Satan after he was expelled from Paradise) is his avowed enemy.

With his arrogance, narcissism, and racism exposed, Iblīs sought Allah’s permission to lay in ambush for man, so as to try to

“prove” to Allah that man was not worthy of His favor. Allah (ﷻ) granted Iblīs that reprieve until the Day of Judgement. He then placed Adam and his wife Ḥawwā’ (ﷺ) in Paradise, warning the two that they had access to anything and everything therein other than the one tree whose fruit was forbidden to them.

Iblīs enticed the inexperienced couple with the supposed merits of that tree, saying that a taste of its fruit would impart angelic status upon them or even immortality. It is pertinent to note that evil always disguises itself in a pleasing garb; it does not openly admit to its deceiving nature. Thus today, nudity and sexual anarchy, for instance, are presented as “freedoms of expression.” Other evils are similarly normalized through beguiling socialization.

Once ensnared in the satanic trap, Adam and Eve (ﷺ) began to experience shame for the first time, immediately becoming aware of their nakedness, and hence they tried to cover themselves with leaves. When Allah (ﷻ) reminded them of His warning, unlike Iblīs they did not try to justify their disobedience. Instead, by acknowledging their mistake and seeking Allah’s forgiveness (7:23), they substantiated His wisdom in choosing the humble and God-conscious to rule on earth. The contrast with Iblīs’ attitude is clear. Therefore, the satanic humans, who reject Allah’s grace, exhibit as imperialists and Zionists, whereas the *muttaqī* humans, who accede to divine guidance, present as *muslims* (in the generic sense).

After eating from the forbidden tree, Adam and Eve (ﷺ) were sent down to earth for an exceedingly short term (compared to eternity) before ultimately being called back to their supreme Creator. Life on earth would be the proving ground where human resolve, determination, ability, and commitment to Allah’s commands would be tested against Satan’s ambition, efforts, and subterfuge to confuse and alienate man from his Lord. Unlike biblical narrations, the Qur’an rejects the notion that it was Eve who was first tempted by Iblīs and then seduced Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit. Islam neither denigrates woman to lower-class status in this manner, nor expands that to all of humanity with the guilt complex of the “original sin.” Both notions have caused women to endure untold suffering and abuse during the long course of human history.

Resurrection and accountability on the Day of Judgement are again emphasized in this *sūrah*. This is the point that the deniers of Allah’s power and authority reject outright, for it means that all human actions and decisions, even those of the rich and powerful, must by necessity be subjected to a moral standard; that is, the truth is the arbiter of what people do, not powerful people developing some “truth” that aggrandizes them while marginalizing others. People who acquire temporal wealth, power, and authority try to socialize the masses with the mindset that the former are “successful” because of their own abilities and intelligence; that such acquisition has nothing to do with any higher authority. Hence, being raised from the dead to stand to account is a myth created by the powerless who are jealous of the elite; and that the end-all and be-all of life in general is to “get all the gusto you can while the going is good” in the dog-eat-dog here and now, even if that means you have to kill a million people, trample upon their livelihoods, confiscate their resources, and dispossess them of their homes and families along the way.

The point about resurrection in this *sūrah* is reinforced with knowledge about what will transpire on the Day of Accountability, “...as He prompted you [to life] so will you return [to life]” (7:29). Allah (ﷻ) reveals that the Final Day will separate people into three categories based on their conduct on earth: (i) those who committed themselves to Him and hence will be saved and secured in Paradise; (ii) those who objected to and denied Him and thus will perish in the Fire; and (iii) those whose deeds tip the balance neither to the first nor the second, that is, the folks of *al-a’rāf* (the height at which people were placed to witness both the dwellers of Paradise and Hell, and from which the *sūrah* takes its name).

The stories of earlier prophets — Nūḥ, Hūd, Šāliḥ, Lūt, Shu‘ayb, and Mūsá (ﷺ) — and their peoples are narrated as warnings to the elites of Makkah, the Quraysh, in an effort to implore them to take heed not to suffer the same grievous consequences that consumed those social orders. These narratives are intended to remind man about the serious repercussions his societies will face when they persecute their prophets.

This *sūrah* alerts the committed Muslim to a new subject — homosexuality — that is largely justified as normal behavior in many societies of the world today. The people of Lot (ﷺ) indulged in this abominable practice despite divine warnings to the contrary. They not only ignored their prophet's exhortations, they turned against him and his small group of followers. Islam's position is abundantly clear: sexual relations are permitted only between men and women who are legally and morally tied to each other through a bond of marriage (*nikāḥ*) in which gender rights are contingent upon their responsibilities to one another, to the family, and then to the society at large. Promiscuous and deviant sexual behavior — homosexuality, incest, adultery — are condemned in the strongest possible terms with stern warnings from Allah (ﷻ) that those participating in and giving free rein to such behavior will have to face His judgement. The people of Lot were destroyed because they refused to desist from their sexual perversions.

Even though homosexuality and unprotected recreational sex (that is, outside the bounds of marriage) have been the key agents for the spread of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) and HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), not to mention other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), these "lifestyles" are being virtually imposed on people at large. In many countries, children are now being taught from a young age that even though their physiology may indicate one gender, they may belong to the opposite gender. Further, it should not be perceived as out of the ordinary if mother and father are two men or two women.

Following the reverse trajectory of these lifestyles we discover that it was in the 1960s when sexual promiscuity and perversion became widespread. Marriage and family life were its first casualties. It did not take long to move to the next phase with Hollywood leading the way. Hollywood has been the trendsetter in fashion and behavior, with a powerful, almost indomitable contemporary sway. While sexual relations between men and women not married to one another have been common, this soon lost its attraction, especially in the wealthy, influence-peddling circles. New forms of sexual gratification had to be conceived. That is where homosexu-

ality became the new mode of gratification, raging and expanding ever since. In the historically oppressed and minority classes of society, especially the African-American, homosexuality flourished for several decades “in the closet” largely because economic privations made marriage an unfulfillable fantasy. There is a connection here that few are perceptive enough to appreciate.

A parallel behavioral pattern, also the rage, is consumerism. In *Sūrah al-A'rāf*, Prophet Shu'ayb (ﷺ) advised his people to conduct their trade and mercantile practices according to a moral standard. In response, they haughtily chided him, saying, in effect, that he was crazy for telling them to re-evaluate what was already so prosperous for them. Essentially, they were justifying the predatory nature of their “culture,” that the acquisition and accumulation of wealth by any means available, fair or unfair, were the measuring sticks for what is right and what is wrong. And so with a wink and a nod to Shu'ayb's forewarnings of an impending doom, they imperiously threatened to banish him and his followers unless the latter acquiesced to the old ways. This is the attitude of all God-denying people and also those who may “believe” in Him but insist He is somewhere up there and, as such, has no business in the affairs of the world. That is, the elite have a birthright to wealth and the manner of its acquisition and disposal. Such arrogance exposed them to Allah's punishment resulting in their destruction. This was the earliest expression of consumerism in practice.

Today, led by the United States, much of the world is in the grip of consumerism. Everyone and his brother are chasing the “American dream” to satiate their rapacious appetites and self-indulgent lifestyles. Even though this rat race of “keeping up with the Joneses” or “having more than the Joneses” has become an obsession for many and a nightmare for the rest, consumerism is now deeply embedded in the psyche of most people despite the fact that Allah (ﷻ) warns man to “...eat and drink [freely], but not in excess: Verily, He does not love the extravagant!” (7:31).

Consumerism and unlimited consumption are based on the theories of John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946), the famous British economist whose prescriptions are used as the economic template

for Western neoliberal, especially US, policies. His most “radical idea was that governments should spend money they don’t have [and that this theory] may have saved capitalism,” according to Robert Reich, another economist who served as US labor secretary during President Bill Clinton’s administration.<sup>1</sup>

There is also another little known secret about Keynes: he was a homosexual. This may surprise some because Keynes died in 1946, a time when such behavior was still universally condemned (except in certain small, generally affluent, circles). He was averse to women because he considered them inferior, and hence his preference for sexual relations with “equals.” This also explains why he had no children, and did not have the desire to have any. He was part of a group of Bloomsbury “intellectuals” whose predecessors included such well-known figures as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill (this is not to imply that Bentham or Mill were gay). The possibility that his marriage to Russian ballerina Lydia Lopokova in 1925 was a cover for his perverted sexual proclivities, during a largely Victorian period when homosexuality was anathema, has not yet been adequately explored by current biographical writers.

Keynes’ sexual behavior and economic theories were intimately linked. Planning for the future whether in terms of continuation of the human race or financial solvency were not important to him. Consumption in the here and now was. His prescription to spend money not in the government’s possession has burdened future generations with mountains of debt. The United States as the most profligate country in the world is also the most indebted. As this volume goes to press, the US national debt officially stands at \$21 trillion surpassing its total GDP (\$19.8 trillion). It has no capacity to pay this debt now or in the future, yet no economist has offered an effective challenge to the spending policy that is making life intolerably difficult for most people the world over. What is really subsidizing this debt, so that Western economies can stay afloat so to speak, are the resources of the defenseless, dispossessed, and downtrodden, hence the numerous US and European wars of aggression on Third-World countries considered to be easy pickings or low hanging fruit.

Inequality between states and between people within states is increasing exponentially as Oxfam's report has shown.<sup>2</sup> It found that 82% of the total wealth created in 2017 went to the top 1% while the bottom 50% — 3.7 billion people — got nothing. Such disparities are the direct result of the Keynesian economic model that rewards the rich while further impoverishing the poor (and for generations to come!). Today's greed is meant to be underwritten by tomorrow's toil. Muslims ought to be making these connections rather than non-Muslims, but they are too busy being jesters and jousters in somebody else's court; reading and understanding the Qur'an has been relegated to a novelty for those looking to mitigate the inevitabilities of *qadar*.

The *sūrah* concludes with repudiating the veneration of idols, pointing out that handmade objects, be they rocks or temples, can neither help nor harm, see nor hear. Deifying them is not only inane, but demeaning of the dignity Allah (ﷻ) placed in man as His *khalīfah* on earth. In reflecting just a little deeper, man would discover the integrity of divinity and the inseparability of authority from it. Though this message is repeatedly stressed throughout the enlightening Qur'an, it can only benefit those who think, reflect, and take heed.

In his encyclopedic *tafsīr*, *The Ascendant Qur'an: Realignment Man to the Divine Power Culture*, Imam Muḥammad al-Āṣī has gone into great detail about how human-crafted institutions and systems distract man away from Allah's consuming authority. It is his discussion of such vital issues, especially the impact of power and wealth on social justice, that makes this *tafsīr* unique. The *mufasssirs* of earlier *tafsīrs* did not have to contend with a normalized homosexuality, an institutional racism, and a predatory nationalism that thrives under the rubric of freedom and equality — and the human "gods" who socialize these moral deviations into the everyday lives of ordinary and unsuspecting people, most of whom have been driven to this point by consuming all their energies in just getting by or barely surviving.

The editor of this volume, as all earlier volumes of the *tafsīr* so far, Afeef Khan, has done an admirable job in ensuring the smooth



reading of the text. Copious endnotes and references are also available to assist the more enterprising readers to delve deeper into the subject matter. A number of brothers, among them Imran Khan, Maksud Djavadov, and Hassam Munir have helped in different stages of this *tafsīr* either by proofreading or in preparing the indices. We are grateful to them all for their selfless help and dedication.

We are also grateful to all those who have helped in other ways in getting us this far with a project of monumental proportions. May Allah (ﷻ) reward them for their help and support, *āmīn*. We are confident that this *tafsīr* will occupy an honored place in the massive compendium of *tafsīr* literature and will be of benefit to Muslims as well as sincere non-Muslims seeking the truth and understanding of the divine message. An electronic version of this 13th volume is available for reading, or downloading from the ICIT digital library ([www.icit-digital.org](http://www.icit-digital.org)). Hard copies can of course be obtained directly from ICIT and *Crescent International*, or from various online retailers.

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Rajab 7, 1439AH (3-25-2018CE)

## Endnotes

- 1 Robert B. Reich, *Time Magazine*, V153 N12, "Economist John Maynard Keynes." (New York, New York: Time Inc., March 29, 1999).  
<http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,990614-1,00.html>
- 2 Max Lawson et al., *Reward Work, not Wealth*. (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxfam GB, January, 2018), pp. 8–10.  
[https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/bp-reward-work-not-wealth-220118-summ-en.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp-reward-work-not-wealth-220118-summ-en.pdf)



## List of Honorifics

Honorifics are the words expressed by every Muslim when the name of Allah (ﷻ), the name of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the names of Allah's previous Prophets (ﷺ) are mentioned, spoken, or written. These are placed in parentheses after the name of each of the above is expressed. They are known to nearly every Muslim; however as this is an English-language *tafsīr* meant for a largely English-speaking audience that may have little experience with this kind of Islamic etiquette, the list below identifies the ones used throughout this volume, along with their meanings and specific usages.



*subhānahu wa-ta'ālā* (Exalted and August is He): used for Allah alone.



*ṣallā allāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi wa-sallam* (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family): used for Muhammad in any and all of his designations, such as *Messenger of Allah*, *the Prophet*, *the Messenger*, *Rasūl-Allāh*, etc.



*'alayhi al-salām* (peace be upon him): used for every other prophet; masculine singular.



*'alayhim al-salām* (peace be upon them): used for all other prophets; inclusive plural, masculine and feminine.



*'alayhā al-salām* (peace be upon her): used for Eve, the wife of Adam, and for Mary, the mother of Jesus, among others; feminine singular.



*'alayhimā al-salām* (peace be upon them both): used for any combination of two prophets, for Adam and Eve, or for Mary and Jesus together; inclusive dual, masculine and feminine.

# Transliteration Chart

## Consonants

أ	none (initial)	ض	ḍ
ؤ	' (medial or final)	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	ة	ḥ
ش	sh	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

## Vowels and Diphthongs

□	a	ا□	ā	□ى	á
□	u	□آ	ā	□ئى	ay
□	i	□و	ū	□ؤ	aw
		□ى	ī		

The small box in the table above represents an Arabic consonant; for instance, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table would assume the following configuration,

ف□	fa	فَا	fā	فَعِي	fá
ف□	fu	فَأ	fā	فَعِي	fay
ف□	fi	فُو	fū	فَعُو	faw
		فِي	fī		

## Tanwīn and Tashdīd

□	an	□ي	ayy	□و	aww
□ى	an	□و	ūw	ف	ff
□	un	□ي	īy (medial)	ش	shsh
□	in	□ي	ī (final)	ر	rr

Similarly, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table above would look like the following,

فَا	fan	فَعِي	fayy	فَعُو	faww
فِي	fan	فَعُو	fūw	ف	ff
ف□	fun	فَعِي	fīy (medial)	ش	shsh
ف□	fin	فِي	fī (final)	ر	rr

# 7

## Sūrah al-A'rāf, Part 1

### The Faculty of Discernment

*Al-A'rāf*, the seventh *sūrah* in the way the Qur'an has been organized, beginning with *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, is longer than the preceding *sūrah* — *al-An'ām*. Its *āyāt* were revealed in Makkah, and according to the people of Madinah and al-Kūfah, they number 206, while those who hail from al-Baṣrah and al-Shām say they are 205.<sup>1</sup> The *sūrah*'s name, *al-A'rāf*, which appears twice in this collection of *āyāt*, is understood by some scholars to be a barrier between Paradise and the Fire.

*Sūrah al-A'rāf* gives more insight into the narratives of the Prophets (ﷺ), and lays out further details about the nature of man's commitment to Allah (ﷻ). It complements the *āyāt* of the previous *sūrah* by rounding out certain facets of Allah's authority unblemished by temporal rivals or human derivatives. The matter of resurrection and compensation comes up again, as does the life to come and its inevitable results that are contingent on what man does in his physical earthly life.

### Contextual Overview

*Sūrah al-A'rāf* puts the reader inside the pages of history as he should understand it. This archive concerns the history of man with God, and the struggle of all the Prophets (ﷺ) who concerned themselves with exemplifying a normal and natural relationship with the Creator as Authority and recourse. *Sūrah al-An'ām* concentrated on the essence and the “theory” of divine commitment, the covenant, and man’s pledge to honor Allah (ﷻ) as Authority and Lawgiver. The *āyāt* of this *sūrah* illustrate how that theory was practically implemented throughout the course of human history as prophets struggled within their own societies and with their own people to constantly return them to their natural disposition — as Allah’s subjects and servants.

In looking at mankind’s history — regardless of its ups and downs, its victories and defeats, its civility and barbarity, and its extension from one end of the world to the other and from beginning generations to latter ones — through the vision of the Qur’an we cannot escape the realization that all of them from all times and places will wind up on Resurrection Day. They will all come back to their Mighty Maker and Conclusive Creator. Each individual will stand to account for his earthly record. And no one, not even a blood relative or closest confidant, will be able to advocate for another. These humans will then realize that they were aliens on earth, and that they are now back to their “country of origin,”

**As it was He who brought you into being in the first instance, so also [unto Him] you will return: some [of you] He will have graced with His guidance, and some [of you] will have incurred opprobrium. These have designated demons as superiors to the exclusion of Allah — and they think they are guided” (7:29–30).**

The sense that humanity has come back home and that its final domicile is the end-life comes through vividly in this *sūrah*. Life on earth was just short, nebulous, and transient — a distant memory. In outline fashion, this *sūrah* encompasses the following general themes:



1. The glorious Qur'an is the word of Allah (ﷻ) – the *sūrah* begins with a reference to this divine Writ, which is miraculous in construction, content, and conveyance — a blessing from the Most Gracious.
2. The fatherhood of Adam (ﷺ) – all people are descended from the same father. The *sūrah* relates that Allah ordered the angels to prostrate themselves to Adam as a matter of approval and respect (prostration in this context does not mean worship or adulation); and that, furthermore, Satan is the enemy of man. This represents a return to the narrative of Adam and Iblīs (the name of Satan before he was expelled from Paradise), and how the former ultimately fell to earth. The “internal speculations” induced by Satan — the symbol of evil, trouble, and trials — were responsible for this seminal event in the history of humanity on earth. Though aspects of this were already covered in *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, this segment of *al-A'rāf* gives the reader some more information.
3. The confirmation of *tawhīd* (Allah's combined authority and divinity) – this means that He is not bifurcated by human notions or perceptions of Him; thus, He alone is man's source of values, laws, and vital information that sets a straight course for a prosperous life, **“Follow what has come to you from on high from your Sustainer, and do not follow in exclusion to Him [false] superiors” (7:3).**
4. Revelation and message (the *wahy* and the *risālah*) – revelation has been established and determined by the advent of the Qur'an from on high upon the Prophet (ﷺ). The essence of this and all preceding revelations is to put into human and social motion their proportionate and just contents. This objective comprised the historical mission of all prophets, **“O children of Adam! When apostles come to you narrating to you My [power] presence...” (7:35).**
5. The substantiation of resurrection and compensation in the end-life – *Sūrah al-A'rāf* imparts knowledge about resurrection and revival on the Day of Accountability, **“...as He prompted you [to life] so will you return [to life]” (7:29).** The Final

Day will segment people into three categories: those who committed themselves to Allah (ﷻ) and hence will be saved and secured in Paradise; those who objected to and denied Him and thus will perish in the Fire; and those who find themselves in between, that is the folks of *al-a'rāf*.

6. Evidence of Allah's existence – of the many validations of Allah's existence are His creation of the heavens and the earth in six days; the sequence of night and day; the utility assets of the Sun, the Moon, and other celestial bodies; and the blooming of vegetation and produce.
7. The threat of destruction – Allah (ﷻ) destroyed offensive social structures so that other societies may learn and thereby become secure. In this way, all people are being warned of the consequences of social inequity. Labor and good deeds that are born of commitment to Allah generate blessings, bounties, and prosperity, **“And had the folks within societies committed themselves and accounted for Allah's power, we would then have opened up for them [an inundation] of blessings and prosperity from both the heavens and the earth” (7:96)**. The followers of prophets are the ones who can translate Allah's favors and grace into the responsibility of leading mankind, **“Moses said to his people, ‘Seek Allah's help and be patient; certainly the earth is Allah's and He bequeaths it to whomever He wills of His subjects’” (7:128)**.
8. The stories of Allah's Prophets (ﷺ) – in this *sūrah*, Allah (ﷻ) goes through a series of narratives concerning the prophets He dispatched to humanity: Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lūṭ, Shu'ayb, and Mūsá (ﷺ). These prophetic chronicles are intended to remind man about what happens to peoples and societies when they go against their prophets. One of the outstanding illustrations in this milieu is the stand Moses (ﷺ) took against the all-time dictator — the Pharaoh. Included in these accounts is a reminder of the counter-evolution of the Children of Israel into simians and swine when they contradicted Allah's word and will. Along the same lines, an evil scholar is likened to a dog, **“And had We willed it We would have elevated him [the**

**scholar] with it [his knowledge], but he inclined toward the earth [and its life]; so his analogy is like a dog: if you demand of him he can't catch his breath, and if you leave him alone he [still] can't catch his breath..." (7:176).**

9. The repudiation of idol-worshiping – the *āyāt* here pity those who adore things and venerate objects that cannot help or harm, cannot see or hear, be they rocks or temples; and so they impel man to discover the integrity of divinity and the inseparability of authority from it, barring which man will be lost and irredeemable.

## The Qur'an Came to Challenge the Status Quo

Although the narrative in the Qur'an here is about history, it is not a simple, dispassionate chronicling of events. Rather, it is a history — as presented to the listeners in Arabia at the time of Muhammad (ﷺ) and to anyone else until the end of earthly time — of struggle between those who affirm Allah's authority and those who deny it.

- In the name of Allah, the Mercy-Giving, the Merciful.
- (7:1) *Alif-Lām-Mīm-Ṣād.*
- (7:2) A divine Writ has been bestowed from on high upon you — and let there be no doubt about this in your heart — in order that you may warn [the erring] thereby, and [thus] admonish the committed Muslims,
- (7:3) “Follow what has been sent down to you by your Sustainer, and follow no masters other than Him.” How seldom do you keep this in mind!
- (7:4) And how many a [rebellious] community have We destroyed with Our punishment coming upon it by night, or while they were resting at noontide!
- (7:5) And when Our punishment came upon them, they had nothing to say for themselves, and could only cry, “Verily, we were wrongdoers!”
- (7:6) Thus [on Judgement Day], We shall most certainly call to account all those to whom a [divine] message was sent, and We shall most certainly call to account the message-bearers [themselves];
- (7:7) And thereupon We shall most certainly reveal to them Our knowledge [of their doings]: for never have We been absent [from them].
- (7:8) And true will be the weighing on that Day: and those whose weight [of good deeds] is heavy in the balance — it is they, they who shall be successful;
- (7:9) Whereas those whose weight is light in the balance — it is they who will have squandered their own selves by their willful rejection of Our messages (al-A'rāf:1–9).

## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْمَصَّ ① كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُن فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ  
 بِهِ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ② اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا  
 تَتَّبِعُوا مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ③ وَكَمْ مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا  
 فَجَاءَهَا بَأْسُنَا بَيِّنًا أَوْ هُمْ قَائِلُونَ ④ فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ  
 بَأْسُنَا إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ⑤ فَلَنَسْئَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ  
 إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْئَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ⑥ فَلَنَقْضُنَّ عَلَيْهِم بِعِلْمٍ وَمَا كُنَّا  
 غَائِبِينَ ⑦ وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ فَمَن ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ  
 هُمُ الْمَفْلُحُونَ ⑧ وَمَن خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ  
 بِمَا كَانُوا بِعَآيِنَتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ ⑨

This *sūrah* begins with the four letters *alif*, *lām*, *mīm*, and *ṣād*. The exact and definite explanation of why some *sūrahs* in the Qur'an begin with certain letters is not yet clear. One of the explanations favored by this author suggests that these letters are presented for the Arabians and for all readers as the "raw material" out of which the succeeding *āyāt* are composed. These letters of the alphabet are in the possession of all humans, yet no one has demonstrated the capability of constructing even one verse equivalent to an *āyah* in this Book. These letters may also have a "sound" value,

which has yet to be discovered. They may also serve as an alert function. Regardless, however, it cannot be stated with certainty what their precise meaning is at the beginning of many *sūrah*s in this conscious Qur'an. Nonetheless, from seemingly meaningless letters, there emerge obviously meaningful words,

**A divine Writ has been bestowed from on high upon you — and let there be no doubt about this in your heart — in order that you may warn [the erring] thereby, and [thus] remind the committed Muslims (7:2).**

This divine disclosure, being a public Book, was revealed to warn and to prompt. Therefore, it has to be detailed to those who will take offense and explained to those who will be motivated. Some people will not like what the Qur'an says. These types have ancient traditions to fall back on, they may have beliefs contrary to the Qur'an, or they may have connections and interests that are ill-suited to the message herein. The Qur'an carries words that do not sit easy with oppressive status quos, aggressive governments, or playboy societies. No person explaining the meanings of the Qur'an should expect a walk in the park on a nice summer day. The substance of these *āyāt* requires muscle in the psychology of man. And no one understands this better than those who walk the Qur'anic walk. The Prophet (ﷺ) brought this to life in his struggle with the Arabian society around him from the first words of **"Iqra'!: Read!"** (96:1) and **"Yā ayyuhā al-muddaththir!: O you [heretofore] unheralded one"** (74:1) all the way to **"Today have I perfected your *dīn* for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My blessings, and willed that self-surrender unto Me shall be your *dīn*"** (5:3).

This history of struggle is not confined to Arabia over a millennium ago, nor was it completed by the first generations of Muslims around the Prophet. Islam is not some foregone event that happened once, and is now history. The Islam that comes out of this Qur'an is a nonstop struggle until the Day of Judgement. The more humanity deviates from God the more it needs this Islam, and

the more the struggle continues. The course of human history has witnessed social relapses and national failures in staying true to the line of scripture and revelation. This backsliding and retrogression constitutes the enemy of progress and prosperity. Only Islam has the remedy for such social failures and cultural blunders. A Muslim in the footsteps of Muhammad (ﷺ) cannot be satisfied with saving a soul while sacrificing a society. Retail *da'wah* is no substitute for an overarching *dīn*.

Taking on the powers that be is nothing less than an intimidating and daunting task. When governments, establishments, and regimes contravene the authority of Allah (ﷻ), the Qur'an calls for their overthrow. This is done through the will of Allah's subjects who struggle toward this end. But when they have to endure against state power as their struggle seems to be getting tougher and tougher, they will need assuring words from Allah as did the Prophet (ﷺ) himself, **"A divine Writ has been sent down to you [Muhammad] so that in your heart there shall be no lack of confidence in it. You shall warn and prod with it [the Qur'an]."** Were it not for such a struggle, those who would be cheered by the Qur'an could never be distinguished from those who would be jeered by it.

Given the global *jāhiliyah* in vogue today, the committed Muslims need all the assurances and comfort they can get from Allah (ﷻ). Even territories that once belonged to the domain of Islam, where the authority of Allah was the law of the land and the value system of man, are now the playground of imperialism and Zionism — two world-powers that are waging war to prevent "struggle" or jihad from being part of the Islamic character.

As a result some Muslims feel ashamed or embarrassed to speak about an Islamic struggle, despite the fact that their *dīn*, the Qur'an, and the Prophet (ﷺ) came with the objective of reconfiguring the social and political world. The committed Muslims, who are confident of their Islamic identity, look forward to the day when mankind affirms the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and disavows the dominance of man over man. In such a world, people will be the subjects of Allah when they honor Him in the full sense of the word; they

will not have to be lorded over by racists, nationalists, or elitists; and their societies will come out of economic exploitation and racial enslavement to honor their true Superior and sole Authority. This new world of tomorrow will be selfless, dignified, and cooperative.

The powers that be today are composed of political thieves, ideological illusionists, and religious reactionaries who thrive on a contrived God without authority. A good part of this global *jāhili* terrain is dominated by materialists. Their philosophy of materialism holds that matter is the primary or only reality, with mind and will being dependent upon and reducible to physical causes and processes. Materialism opposes those philosophies that assert there are spiritual beings, angels, or powers at work in the world. It also opposes *idealism*, which reduces matter to mind. Since materialism teaches that everything can, in principle, be explained by physical causes and conditions, materialists have usually been deterministic, insisting that there is a physical cause for every event.<sup>2</sup>

Materialism was taught by some of the early Greek philosophers, including the atomists Leucippus and Democritus (5th century BCE), who sought to explain all things through the movement of material atoms. Epicurus (342–270BCE) taught that nothing comes from nothing and that composed bodies are the result of the collision of simple atoms in motion. Lucretius developed Epicurean materialism in his poem *De rerum natura* (*On the Nature of Things*), which argued against the immortality of the soul and thereby sought to assuage the religious fear of the gods and of death.<sup>3</sup>

In the 17th and 18th centuries, philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and the Frenchmen La Mettrie, Diderot, and d'Holbach championed materialism and applied it to human psychology. Materialist ideas were given further impetus with the rise in popularity of Darwinism in the 19th century, and of materialist biology, biochemistry, and cybernetics in the past century. The dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels shares with classical materialism its belief in one reality — matter — and its claim that all true knowledge derives from the natural sciences. However, Marxism rejects extreme forms of mechanistic materialism and allows for plausible dialectical or historical openness and progress.<sup>4</sup> Materialism has be-



come, for practical reasons, a spent force of the camp that has been in a systemic denial of God throughout the past two centuries. The Soviet Union's collapse brought down with it any real interest in such an ideology rooted in the rejection of God. In a smaller part of this *jāhili* terrain, there is a mass of people, living mostly in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, that acknowledges "a deity," but assembles alongside it other deities and lords.

Equal, if not greater in numbers, to the materialistic part of this terrain is the Judeo-Christian strain of religious concepts. These are at fault ostensibly for attributing an offspring to God, or for entertaining the notion of "God in the flesh"; however, more influential in the life of societies is their fault for raising clergymen into positions of authority that eclipse the authority of God. Their Church set the proverbial stage for the sharp and prolonged backlash against "religion" throughout the past four centuries in Europe. Today, Judeo-Christian evasion and escapism from God's authority gave the world capitalism and racism, and other such ideologies and prejudices. Now there is a population of non-Christian Christians and non-Jewish Jews who take solace in their excogitated dictatorships and democracies, and other such forms of rule and governance. They are on par with the ancient Greeks and Romans in devising governmental systems and lifestyles without God's guidance or supervision.

Finally, rounding out this all-encompassing worldwide *jāhiliyyah* is the so-called Islamic (Muslim) world. All governmental systems in this vast part of the world are very poor and miserable duplicates of their "Judeo-Christian" counterparts. There is no *dīn* belonging to Allah (ﷻ) that joins the Muslims together. Though they may share common rituals and ceremonies, as well as an immense pool of a feeling of togetherness, there is no practical program that binds these Muslims on the basis of equality and within a reference of justice — all of which come from Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). Allah's *dīn* is His organization and system; these begin with values and develop through morals until they become social "law and order." Allah's *dīn* is not a religion that informs a *masjid* irrelevant to the social activities and interactions of man.

And so winding it all down, there exists now a non-scriptural world that echoes the non-scriptural world into which the Qur'an was introduced almost a millennium-and-a-half ago. All the social norms and systems that rule in today's world are godless and even satanic. Thus, the task ahead is for the Qur'an's representatives to tap into humanity's open-mindedness with these ever-instructive and liberating *āyāt*. The objective of bringing humanity back to its Sustainer will be confronted by national interests, entrenched bureaucracies, racial biases, corporate structures, and a war-class that will do everything in its reach to silence or distort the Qur'anic content, the scriptural subject matter, and the Almighty's authority. And this is where the struggle lies. Today, a Qur'anic character true to the prophetic mission of transforming the world according to scripture will have to relive the struggle of Muhammad (ﷺ) when he stepped into a world steeped in selfishness and instability.

When man goes out on his own and becomes his own authority he begins to tackle such issues as "the art of living together," the rational resources of the individual for social living, the morality of nations, the ethical attitudes of privileged classes, the ethical attitudes of the proletarian class, justice through revolution, the preservation of moral values in politics, the conflict between individual and social morality, and finally the religious resources of the individual for social living (if there are any of those left).

In today's socially polluted environment, only a clean and mature conscience can say the truth about the human condition: all human societies exist without God's authority. This fact renders these societies backward and retrograde, meaning that the human condition today has returned to its pre-scriptural state, after an extended post-scriptural bequest. It was Islam that saved this human condition from atrophy and failure when it came to mankind and stretched out of Arabia. Today, mankind needs that same movement to salvage humanity out of the rut it finds itself in.

With all the fine talk about freedom and human dignity in today's "civilized" world, mankind is, in fact, enslaved and perverted by the same establishments that sing the song of liberty. The civilization born of scripture is the only one capable of granting man

freedom and dignity. The fair and just authority of Allah (ﷻ) is what confers equality, dignity, and freedom on human societies, regardless of race, language, denomination, or economic status. No such thing is possible in a society that is run by authorities who always monopolize power for their own interests. When some people have power and others do not, there will always be oppression, abuse, and discrimination. But when society is conscious and on alert concerning Allah's power there is ample opportunity for equality and freedom.

Man cannot be judged or treated in a discriminatory way because of his ethnic origin, color, nation, or country. Man is honorable regardless of these descriptions because of his mind and heart. Man is a soul and a savant, therefore he is graced and respected. Besides, man does not have a choice as to what color, language, or people he is born into. So he should not be privileged or underprivileged because he was born into a particular race or ethnicity, class or social status. Rather this privilege or lack thereof has to do with man's will; and man's will has a choice of either affirming Allah's authority of justice or any other authority that will eventually breed oppression, discrimination, and other forms of social dislocation. This is the message of this divine Writ that has come from heaven, leaving no ambiguity in man's heart or wit so that some people are put on notice while others are motivated,

**A divine Writ has been bestowed from on high upon you — and let there be no ambivalence about this in your heart — in order that you may warn [the erring] thereby, and [thus] drill the committed Muslims (7:2).**

### Those Who Follow the Prophet Cannot Yield to Kings

After the *āyah* above spoke directly to the Prophet, the following *āyah* speaks directly to his followers, then and there and here and now. The essence of this issue is to follow up and follow through. Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) is the original best example and the rest of his followers are expected to carry this forward, **“Follow what has been sent down to you by your Sustainer, and follow no masters other than Him. How seldom do you keep this in mind!”** Concisely stated, either the Muslims follow in the footsteps of their beloved Prophet who struggled with his society over the issue of “authority,” or they fall into the crowd of those who rip Allah (ﷻ) of His authority while conferring it upon idols or icons, celebrities or kings, high priests or commanders-in-chief,

And how many a [recreant] society have We destroyed, with Our punishment coming upon it by night, or while they were resting at noontide! And when Our punishment came upon them, they had nothing to say for themselves, and could only cry, “Verily, we were violators of justice!”

Thus [on Judgement Day], We shall most certainly call to account all those to whom a [divine] message was sent, and We shall most certainly call to account the message-bearers [themselves]; and whereupon We shall most certainly reveal to them Our knowledge [of their doings]: for never have We been absent [from them]. And true [and accurate] will be the calculation [of man's deeds] on that Day: and those whose weight [of good deeds] is extensive in the balance — it is they, they who shall be successful; whereas those whose weight is shallow in the balance, it is they who will have squandered their own selves by their willful rejection of Our messages (7:4–9).

The collapse of ancient societies harkens a stark lesson for all subsequent inheritors and successors. The Qur'an carries within it

reminders and references to the breakdown and disappearance of erstwhile societies. This Qur'anic information is presented to pulsing hearts, thinking minds, and heightened consciences. Earlier societies were destroyed because they became disjointed from Allah (ﷻ). They simply reached a point of indifference or lack of concern over what Allah had to say. And so Allah's "death blow" pummeled such poor-spirited societies when they were "sleeping" or when they least expected it, **"And how many a [disobedient] society have We destroyed, with Our punishment coming upon it by night, or while they were resting at noontide!"**

Societies become complacent as they distance themselves from their Creator. They grow into a "peace of mind" as they see the material world around them bloom. Shielded by whatever technology of the time they may have acquired, they begin thinking they are beyond any means of disintegration and destruction. It is in these placid and smug moments that a bolt of divine penalty strikes them, causing their devastation and death. When Allah's word of justice is passed onto their collective being, those self-conceited members of what was perceived to be a techno-protected society can only confess to the fact of the matter, **"And when Our comeuppance came upon them, they had nothing to say for themselves, and could only cry, 'Verily, we were in violation of justice!'"**

For man to say anything he wants, in general, is taken for granted. Confession, though, does not come easily. But in this instance and with these dynamics the renegades from Allah (ﷻ) have nothing else to say. The words, **"In fact, we were in violation of justice!"** are the crux of the issue, for they summarize why societies cease to exist. To make sense of what this "violation of justice" means, the Muslims of Qur'anic mind need to understand that justice can only be done on earth by men who honor the authority of Allah. Once man abandons Allah's authority in favor of other temporal authorities, he sets himself and his society up for the consequences of injustice, inequality, and offensive activities. This is what the attitude of *shirk* is all about.

In trailing these elaborate meanings of how societies fall and fail, the Qur'an moves immediately to the end-life (the *ākhirah*). So

seamless is the transition that one cannot palpably perceive any real barrier between the sentient life and the life that follows,

**Thus [on Judgement Day], We shall most certainly call to account all those to whom a [divine] message was sent, and We shall most certainly call to account the message-bearers [themselves]; and thereupon We shall most certainly reveal to them Our knowledge [of their worldly doings]: for never have We been absent [from them]. And true [and precise] will be the tally on that Day: and those whose weight [of good deeds] is profound in the balance — it is they, they who shall be fortunate; whereas those whose weight is light in the balance — it is they who will have squandered their own selves by their willful injustice to Our messages [and power presence] (7:6–9).**

In this grand assembly on Judgement Day it is not enough for the conscience of “false societies” to express itself. Testimony will be given not only by the people who were in times and positions to receive scripture, but also by the conveyors of scripture themselves, that is, the messengers and prophets. At that time, there will be no option other than to speak the truth. Those who are at fault will confess, and those who struggled will profess. Then Allah (ﷻ) will reveal to them the truth of their earthly lives — what they can recall and what they cannot, what they still have in their memories and what has escaped. Allah was there, attending and present, when they were pursuing their objectives on earth. Allah was never preoccupied, distracted, or absentminded from what they were doing.

**“And the measurement [of good and bad] on that Day is unerring and actual: as for those who have weighty good deeds, they are celebrated.”** As there is no place on the Final Day for mistakes, confusion, or disputes, the balance of those who have done a generous amount of good will tip in the direction of felicity and prosperity. No accomplishment could be greater than this, for they

will be taking their final steps into Paradise, after a long worldly journey wherein their struggle has now been redeemed.

**“Whereas those whose measurement was light and superficial in the balance — it is they who will have squandered their own selves by their willful injustice to Our messages [and power].”** These are the true losers. At this point, they will be able to see for their own selves how they lost it. They could have been in possession of estates, mansions, treasuries, and natural resources galore in their worldly life, but when they are not in possession of their own selves then their loss is incalculable, massive, and final. Accumulated good deeds, not accumulated bank accounts, will carry the hour on Judgement Day. They forfeited themselves when they denied Allah (ﷻ), His scripture, and His strength, say-so, and superiority, **“In fact, *shirk* is a large-scale injustice” (31:13).**

## Satan and Man's Intellectual Confusion

This next Qur'anic passage represents a journey into man's distant past. It begins by stating that Allah (ﷻ) has assigned man a controlling position on earth. The first sentence from this suite of *āyāt* precedes the whole story of genesis and Adam (ﷺ), **“Yes, in truth, [O men], We have fixed you firmly on earth, and We have rendered thereon means of livelihood for you: [yet] how seldom are you grateful!”** Knowledge beyond anything human beings may imagine was employed to create life and matter and then make them compatible. Proceeding beyond that, human life was calculated to be in control of matter — this is what now exists here on earth.

Earth is conducive to human life. Its atmosphere is calibrated to sustain life; its organic matter helps in the upkeep of this life. The Earth's position within the Solar System triggers or is conducive to biological growth. The Earth's rotation around the Sun and the distance of the Moon from the Earth all are meant to generate and sustain the different forms of earthly life. The speed at which the Earth, the Sun, and the Moon move are also favorable to life. The elements, organic and inorganic; the water, salty or fresh; and the air, at high and low altitudes all are supportive of life. This arrangement of matter and material, elements and things, the micro and the macro — all of this — places humans in a position of command and control of the earthly and the worldly. This applies to nature in its totality: the living world, including plants, animals, fungi, and all microorganisms, and naturally formed features of the landscape, such as mountains and rivers. Man was designated to be the master of all this.

- (7:10) Yes, indeed, [O men], We have given you a [bountiful] place on earth, and appointed thereon means of livelihood for you: [yet] how seldom are you grateful!
- (7:11) Yes, indeed, We have created you, and then formed you; and then We said to the angels, “Prostrate yourselves before Adam!” — whereupon they [all] prostrated [themselves], save Iblīs: he was not among those who prostrated.



وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعِيشَةً قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾ قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾ قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوَيْتَنِي لِأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَا تَنبَهُهُمْ مِّنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَنِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ أَخْرَجْ مِنْهَا مَذْمُومًا مَّدْحُورًا لَّمِن تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَتَادَمُّ أُسْكُنُ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجَكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَوَسَّسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءِئِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنِ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَائِكَةً أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ فَدَلَّهُمَا بِغُرُوبٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِن رِّقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنِ

تِلْكَمَا الشَّجَرَةَ وَأَقْلَ لَكُمْ إِنَّا الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ رَبِّنَا  
 ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَعْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾  
 قَالَ أَهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَعٌ إِلَى  
 حِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

- (7:12) [And Allah] said, “What has kept you from prostrating yourself when I commanded you?” Answered [Iblis], “I am better than he: You have created me out of fire, whereas him You have created out of clay.”
- (7:13) [Allah] said, “Down with you, then, from this [state] — for it is not meant for you to show arrogance here! Go forth then: verily, among the humiliated shall you be!”
- (7:14) Said [Iblis], “Grant me a respite until the Day when all shall be raised from the dead.”
- (7:15) [And Allah] replied, “Verily, you shall be among those who are granted a respite.”
- (7:16) [Whereupon Iblis] said, “Now that You have thwarted me, I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Your straight way,
- (7:17) “And shall most certainly fall upon them openly as well as in a manner beyond their awareness, and from their right and from their left: and most of them You will find ungrateful.”
- (7:18) [And Allah] said, “Go forth from here, disgraced and disowned! [And] as for such of them as follow you, I will most certainly fill Hell with you all!

- (7:19) “And [as for you], O Adam, dwell you and your wife in this garden, and eat, both of you, whatever you may wish; but do not approach this one tree, lest you become evildoers!”
- (7:20) Thereupon Satan whispered to the two with a view to making them conscious of their nakedness, of which [hitherto] they had been unaware; and he said, “Your Sustainer has but forbidden you this tree lest you two become [as] angels, or lest you live forever.”
- (7:21) And he swore to them, “Verily, I am of those who wish you well indeed!” —
- (7:22) And thus he led them on with deluding thoughts. But as soon as the two had tasted [the fruit] of the tree, they became conscious of their nakedness; and they began to cover themselves with pieced-together leaves from the garden. And their Sustainer called to them, “Did I not forbid that tree to you and tell you, ‘Verily, Satan is your open foe?’”
- (7:23) The two replied, “O our Sustainer! We have sinned against ourselves, and unless You grant us forgiveness and bestow Your mercy upon us, we shall most certainly be lost!”
- (7:24) Said He, “Down with you, [and be henceforth] enemies unto one another, having on earth your abode and livelihood for a while:
- (7:25) There shall you live” — He added — “and there shall you die, and thence shall you be brought forth [on Resurrection Day]!” (al-A'rāf:10–25).

Allah (ﷻ) created man to be proficient in and to surmount the challenges of nature and existence. Hence man studies living organisms and systems. The beginnings of biology as a science are the natural history observations made by curious amateurs, travelers, farmers, and all those in contact with the natural world. Its rapid development during the 20th century led to the increasing subdivision of biology into a variety of specialized disciplines, although the most recent trend is toward more integrated interdisciplinary studies.

An organism's life cycle passes through a series of stages, from the formation of an individual by the fertilization of gametes pro-

duced by one generation, through to maturation and the production of gametes by that individual, and to its eventual death. In vertebrates there is usually a simple life cycle from fertilization to death, but in lower animals and plants the life cycle is often complex, involving the alternation of sexually reproducing and asexually reproducing generations that may or may not be similar in appearance.

All these scientific endeavors of man in our generation and in previous generations attest to the fact that man has a rational control over matter. Unfortunately, the ideas belonging to Greek and Roman civilizations give the impression that there is an in-built hostility between man and nature. The same is the case with current Euro-American civilizations. They give the impression that there is a universal force at odds with man. And, therefore, man has to fight for his survival, or has to conquer earth or space, or has to launch wars against aliens once those aliens are detected. The undercurrent philosophies of those ancient and modern civilizations have humanity convinced that man has to defeat or conquer nature and the universe, in an ongoing battle between the human species on the one hand and creation, nature, and the universe on the other. These philosophies and ideas are credulous, some are even contemptuous. If nature and the universe were at odds with the human species without a Rational Power being in the equation, man would have never existed.

Man has to break from such a destructive and dysfunctional mentality. Then he has to discover what Allah (ﷻ) is telling him about this subject. It is Allah who created the universe and created man. He created the proportionality in the universe to correspond to the proportionality in man in a way that can effectuate and be supportive of human life, existence, and being. Allah created man with the potential of harnessing the material world around him — without conflict and animus. The relationship between a God-created world and universe and a God-created man is complementary and cooperative, not condemnatory and conflicting.

This Islamic understanding gives man confidence and trust in Allah (ﷻ) and in the harmonious world He created. Knowing this fosters the eagerness to express thanks, gratitude, and praise. It also

motivates man to think, investigate, discover, and invent. Affirming the compatibility of man with nature and life with the universe does not mean that man is now free to annul his mind and cancel his intellect. However, it does mean that man is encouraged to move further into the “mysteries” or the unknown around him to observe, detect, and get to know his surroundings, environment, and habitat.

In current times, or at least in the past century, a human idea-cum-philosophy called *existentialism* was advocated by minds cut off from God. This is just one example among many of misguided ideas conceived by man that are obviously wrong when they are filtered through scripture. Even though this particular philosophical position has had its persuasive advocates, it simply has no roots.

Existentialism is a style of philosophizing that has been influential in the 20th century, though its origins go back to Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Pascal, and even earlier. Philosophers who can be loosely included under the existentialist label are Jaspers, Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel, and Unamuno. That existentialism is not a body of doctrines should be evident from so varied a pool of thinkers. Rather, it should be regarded as a philosophical approach that may lead to very different results. Its starting point is the questioning of human existence itself, understood as an open possibility to which individuals have to give shape and substance by their own decisions. This is what is meant by saying that existence precedes essence. The existentialists are agreed in making a more or less sharp distinction between humans and nature. In Sartre’s philosophy, this distinction is so sharp that it becomes virtually a dualism. But among all the existentialists, it is agreed that with the human phenomenon, something new appeared on this planet, something that is not amenable to the methods of study employed in the investigation of nature.<sup>5</sup>

There is further agreement that the most important characteristic of a human being is freedom. Some existentialists give the impression that it does not matter very much what one becomes so long as it is the result of one’s free choice. To conform to patterns imposed by some external authority is to revert to the status of a

thing or a manufactured object. Freedom thus becomes a value in and of itself. The free person is the authentic human being, while those who compromise their freedom are living inauthentically or in bad faith.<sup>6</sup>

Another common characteristic of the existentialists is the emphasis on *finitude*. Human existence is free, but freedom is always limited by the factual conditions of existence. Thus there is a tragic element in existence. Some existentialists go so far as to suggest that there is a fundamental absurdity in the existence of a being who is both free and finite. This point of divergence reveals why some existentialists are atheists, and others religious. The former see no sense in human existence and in any case believe that the existence of God would be incompatible with the full exercise of human freedom. The latter believe that only God (or transcendence in some form) can bring sense into the human situation, and they would see God as encouraging human freedom.<sup>7</sup>

The existentialists are not, as is sometimes said, irrationalists, but they think that to define humans as rational animals is too narrow a view, and that the whole person needs to be considered, including his will and emotions. It is perhaps not surprising that existentialism has made a strong appeal to theologians, for it allows more scope to the spiritual and creative aspects of human existence than does its chief philosophical rival in the contemporary world, *empiricism*.<sup>8</sup>

Compare the easygoing and natural words of this Qur'an with the twisted and tortured attempts of existentialist and empiricist philosophers as they try to come to grips with concepts and ideas. Yet, despite this obvious contrast, people still fall short in appreciating the God-given word that spares them all these mental tunnels, labyrinths, and sometimes flights of fantasy. The much-needed observation here is that distance from God generates ignorance of Him. Even people who are supposedly "in the Qur'anic know" have a hard time appreciating the peace they get from not having to strike out into the unknown with their bare minds without light and direction from above, "**How seldom are you grateful!**"

### Evolutionism and Creationism: Two Sides of the Same Coin

The *āyāt* then relate the account of humanity at its social genesis — the birth of the social being in the environs of Paradise. The words of the exalted and majestic Sustainer add an aura of honor to this seminal event. Furthermore, the angels were present and in their vicinity, if not among them, was Iblīs; the heavens and the earth were party to this event, as was creation. Therefore, given this audience, this moment ought to be remembered forever,

Yes, indeed, We have created you, and then formed you; and then We said to the angels, “Prostrate yourselves before Adam!” — whereupon they [all] prostrated themselves, save Iblīs: he was not among those who prostrated. [And Allah] said, “What has kept you from prostrating yourself when I commanded you?” Answered [Iblīs], “I am better than he: You have created me out of fire, whereas him You have created out of clay.” [Allah] said, “Down with you, then, from this [state], for it is not meant for you to show arrogance here! Go forth then; verily, among the humiliated shall you be!” Said [Iblīs], “Grant me a respite until the Day when all shall be raised from the dead.” [And Allah] replied, “Verily, you shall be among those who are granted a respite.”

[Whereupon Iblīs] said, “Now that You have thwarted me, I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Your straight way, and shall most certainly fall upon them openly as well as in a manner beyond their awareness, and from their right and from their left: and most of them You will find ungrateful.” [And Allah] said, “Go forth from here, disgraced and disowned! [And] as for such of them as follow you, I will most certainly fill Hell with you all!” (7:11–18).

This is the first scene in this breathtaking narrative. The story here is heady and electrifying. So, in being intentionally deliberate about it, consider one frame at a time,

**And, in fact and truth, We have created you, and then featured you, and then said to the angels, “Bow down to Adam.” And they did [bow down] except Iblīs, he wasn’t one to do so [to bow down in respect] (7:11).**

Creation is an act of Allah (ﷻ). Though human beings are conversant with the word, they do not know exactly what goes into the details of something being created. However, despite man’s limited capacity to understand, he is nonetheless required to familiarize himself with revelation (the Qur’an) as much as is humanly and intellectually possible; hence, he may start with understanding creation as the initiation of life. **“And featured you...”** may refer to the characteristics and identity man has as a social human being. These could be two simultaneous and complementary components or they could be two transitional or developmental stages. Because humans simply do not have unrestricted access to this peculiar act of the Maker and Creator Himself, all arguments about the divine act of “creating” would be theoretical or conjecture.

A sample of the arguments that thoughtful and thinking people try to work into the divine act of creation has become known in contemporary times as evolution(ism) verses creation(ism). Evolution is any gradual directional change, now most commonly used to refer to the cumulative changes in the characteristics of populations of organisms from generation to generation. Evolution occurs by the fixation of changes (mutations) in the structure of the genetic material, and the passing on of these changes from ancestor to descendant. It is well demonstrated over geological time by the sequence of organisms preserved in the fossil record. There are two opposing schools of thought regarding the pattern and tempo of evolution. The gradualist school is based on a model of evolution in which species change gradually through time by slow directional change within a lineage, producing a long graded series of differing forms. The punctuated equilibria school is based on a model in which species are relatively stable and long-lived in geological time, and in which new species appear during outbursts of rapid speciation, followed by the differential success of



certain of the newly formed species. Evolutionism is a widely held 19th-century belief that organisms — individuals, races, and even societies — were intrinsically bound to improve themselves, that changes were progressive, and that acquired characteristics could be transmitted genetically.<sup>9</sup>

Creationism, originally, was the belief that God creates a soul for each human individual at conception or birth. It is now commonly applied to the belief that the Genesis account of creation in the Bible accurately describes the origins of the world and humanity. It is opposed to the theory of evolution, and some evangelical conservative Christians claim there is scientific evidence to support creationism, though this has not been supported by other mainstream scientists.<sup>10</sup>

This polarizing subject has taken on a momentum of its own in the Judeo-Christian world, and as this is the dominant power culture in the world, by extension it has passed into the rest of the world — Muslims included. This is what happens when the Muslims have not thought through the Qur'an, or when the Qur'an is a book on paper as opposed to a Book of mind and heart. That being the case, to provide some context, it would be beneficial to plunge into the ideas that evolve when man leaves the company of God and tries to find his way using his own limited material sources of information as a roadmap. This will be a long journey, not because of the simplicity of Allah's guidance, but because of the tortuous path the two opposing mindsets — the non-scriptural (evolutionary), and the petty-scriptural or semi-scriptural one that now constitutes creationism — have taken.

Starting with creationism, consider that within the single term *creation*, two notions jostle each other. One is creation as the field of relevant preconditions for life that, depending upon circumstances, structure the life of a people or grasp the structure or condition of the universe, the world, humanity and human beings, and the relations between them all — providing an integrated account conducive to better understanding and well-being. The other is creation as normative states or processes whose existence, structure, or dynamic is established as such by some normative authority:

why there is something rather than nothing, or this state of affairs rather than that. Hence, creation can refer to any factors taken as important to the determinative shape and purpose of the universe, the world and human beings, and also to their derivation from an ultimate constitutive state or agency.<sup>11</sup>

In the first sense, the term is closely related to cosmology, the study of the overall structure and evolution of the universe; to cosmogony, the branch of astrophysics that studies the origins and structure of the universe, which considers the means by which this structure came about; and to other wide-ranging studies of the world and humanity. All of these retain a concern for establishing the truth of their conclusions, although without necessarily addressing issues about how this truth is established as such. In the second sense, creation is more closely related to theological cosmology and cosmogony, which consider the normative authority by which the shape and purpose of the universe, the world and human beings are constituted and originated, and how the practice of human life in the world is rendered symmetrical with this shape and purpose.<sup>12</sup>

It is important to recognize that creation is not only a matter of straightforward inquiry into a field and its constitutive reality, but also an issue co-present with most others as their context, in which their preconditions are specified. If, for example, one traces primal features of life such as freedom or salvation, creation is co-present as the configuration of life in the world that makes freedom possible or provides the circumstance within which redemption can occur. In this sense, creation is indirectly present in most central issues, interwoven with them as their context. If there is a universe — or world or life or humanity — the preconditions for its (their) possibility are present in it as creation; and concern with creation has to do with specifying these. How is this universe actual, and how within it is the world as it is, and human beings as they are? What are the conditions for their actuality, and how are they to be sustained by each of them?<sup>13</sup>

These concerns are seen widely in modern science (for example, the “anthropic principle,” referring to the selectivity of conditions in the universe favorable to the emergence of human beings

who can observe it), in modern ecological concerns (for example, the dynamic of relations by which life in the world is rendered possible, and how they are to be sustained), and in recent phenomenological and aesthetic accounts of humanity. In more specifically theological accounts, these are questions about how the proper relation between the universe, the world, and human life is to be sustained through symmetry with the purposes of God, as this is what allows the asymmetries of ignorance and carelessness — and the anti-symmetries of refusal and sin — to be overcome.<sup>14</sup>

Creation is a collective designation for all fundamental understandings of the universe, the world, humanity, and the basis for their constitution. In the wide-ranging inquiries to which such concerns give rise, reference to creation serves as a validation (“this is the case”) or as a statement of ultimate context (“this applies universally”). In this connection, the major question is what provides such finality or ultimacy and how it does so. What sort of “primary principle” might occupy such a place, and how would it be operative in regions such as the universe, the world, and humanity? In what way is it primary, as detached and exerting influence from this detachment, or as inherently related to the universe? Is its effect occasional or pervasive?<sup>15</sup>

Closely associated is the question of the “nature” of the universe, the world, and humanity. Are they complete in their essentials, or requiring further completion? Are they in unimpaired condition, or somehow lacking in integrity or soundness? Whichever is the case, how does their situation reflect the operation of the “primary principle” to which creation alludes? As regards the universe, the world, humanity, and their elements, what is the intrinsic importance of each, and how are they ordered in relation to each other? Do they occupy a fixed hierarchical order of preference in “orders of creation,” from lowest to highest, with each lower one the stage or instrument for the higher? Or are they more close-knit in dynamic interrelations, each requiring due recognition — and honor where appropriate — from the others?<sup>16</sup>

Deeply built into these questions are issues about the very possibility of understanding creation — whether creation, cosmology,

and cosmogony are possible except as speculative extrapolations from the very limited data available to human beings. Insofar as any of their features are seen to be universal and necessary, by what means are they established as such? The questions are perhaps most acute where issues of the “primary constitution” or “ultimate principle” are involved. Can human beings do more than provide themselves with meaningful symbolizations of the situation in which they exist?<sup>17</sup>

Despite such searching and far-reaching questions, the possibility of a coherent notion of creation, traced to its constitutive factors and a creative principle, is crucial to the well-being of human beings and to the existence of the world. Unless there is a well-founded normative structure for the universe, which provides for the full integrity of the world and of humanity in their relations, there is unlikely to be much future for either one. This is the significance of past and present debates about creation.<sup>18</sup>

Most fundamental inquiries about the universe, the world, and humanity, even about fundamental aspects of animate and human life, as well as about their nature and purpose, may be considered aspects of the theme of creation. What makes all of them aspects of creation is that they are concerned with depicting the factors determinative for the universe, the world, and humanity — its origins, unity and order, the character and direction of its movement, how human beings are to be at home in it, and the most fundamental constitution of each: each and all as arising from the divine source.<sup>19</sup>

The most enduring of such explorations seems to give voice to the instinct that there exists a spontaneous harmony between man’s spirit and (cosmic) reality, the very quality that allows his spirit to grasp reality, not only from one specific and superficial viewpoint, but by means of a deep sympathy with its inner structure and its fundamental evolution. The passion of this spirit, however, is for greater harmony, particularly through knowledge: he who does not know what the world is, does not know where he is; and he who does not know for what purpose the world exists, does not know who he is, nor what the world is. Such explorations and in-

ferences take many forms: mythic, symbolic, ritual, historical, philosophical, theological, and scientific.<sup>20</sup>

During the course of history, the concern for creation brought a kind of harmony to the explorations. The major issues were established by relating them to others — the world and humanity were correlated, and both were related to their primary principle, God. In most cases, conceptions of the universe, the world, humanity, and God were inseparable from each other, even if views varied according to which was given primacy and how it was conceived. Sometimes, as in pantheism, universe and world were equated and made coeternal with the divinity dwelling in it, endowed with soul and mind as well as matter and body, and human beings mirroring this as microcosms; in such a case, finite things were modifications of the infinite substance (God) that exceeded them. Or, as for Hegel, God was the Absolute Spirit manifesting itself historically in physical and psychical nature, to be known through knowing the world and the self, which were seen as the indwelling of divinity itself. Sometimes, as in classical theism, God was the transcendent One standing above all as prime mover, from whom the multiplicity of intelligible and sensible things derived as degrees of being; their task was to achieve the being proportioned to them at source.<sup>21</sup>

In rare cases, the harmony of definitions of world, humanity, and God was eliminated through reducing all to one, as in materialism. In this case, the world was said to be all there is, and it could be reduced to primal elements whose order is accidental, not necessary or designed by God. In such a case, the laws of the universe were immanent in its fabric, those of its own matter in motion; and human beings were to make the best of their uncertain situation by their own mental powers and practical will.<sup>22</sup>

Within the creation-located interrelatedness of universe, world, humanity, and God, a variety of other issues were dealt with, for example those of number, structure, and limit. First, were there many worlds in an infinity of time or space, or only one that matches God's most wise and excellent contrivance of things? Second, how were the universe and world structured? Several notions predominated: the world as animate with a soul, its diverse individ-

uals associated for the common good according to their nature and function; the world (visible and invisible) as a divinely instituted society, under divine law; and the world as machine, interdependent moving parts related through linear causation. Third, were they limited, with origin and end, and how? Some suggested their co-eternity with God, others that they began and would end according to the purposes of God.<sup>23</sup>

Each of these, however, raised questions about the relation of world and humanity to God. Was this relation as body to soul, society to monarch, or machine to designer? If the universe and the world were animate, with the perfection of parts relative to whole appropriate to an animal, and the soul diffused through it, it was created godlike by God — as a body to God's soul. This widespread view was rejected by Christians (St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas) as compromising the position of God, who possessed all the perfection of the world in a more eminent way; God's relation to the world was properly viewed as a king present in the world in power. If, in the second case, the world was conceived socially, with things ordered to each other, there was less difficulty for Jews and Christians, for whom things were ordered by God according to their dignity and worth. Divine reason (*logos*) had endowed the world and humanity with a perfection of order (the common good), and governed it by directing each thing to its own end; but ultimately the goal of such government was not the goodness of the world but divine goodness itself — beyond the world. Even in the third case, when the world was seen as a mechanical system, Christians could claim that such a world must proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being and be directed, even if only inscrutably, by final causes. A problem emerged only in the determinism of the world and humanity that accompanied this view.<sup>24</sup>

Within a harmony of knowledge induced by common concern for creation, there were the possibilities for an integrated view of the world, its people, and the purposes of God. And insofar as these were traced to God, the view was seen as having normative authority, one that sufficed for the ordering of human life, not least in its social structure.<sup>25</sup>

In the form in which it was dominant in the West, the teaching of creation followed biblical teachings and the formulations of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and John Calvin. This asserted that the world was made finite and orderly out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) by God's agency, conceived as contingent, sustained by its Creator as the external basis of God's covenant with humanity, and through redemption by Jesus Christ (ﷺ) moved toward its end by the Holy Spirit.<sup>26</sup>

As befits the action of a free and omnipotent God, nothing else — external influence or preexistent matter — was involved. There was no necessity that there should be a creation, nor was its form limited by preexisting materials, but what resulted from God's free act was a world fully formed and independent; no further creation was necessary. In its structure, the world was ordered by the Creator both as a whole and in each part, its order following an hierarchical arrangement, human beings under God but exercising God's dominion over sub-human creation. As priests of creation, human beings were to understand and serve it.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the completeness of its creation, the world was also limited, contingent upon the sustaining providential activity of God. Its future was not in its self-improvement, but in the continuing activity of God to preserve and govern it to bring it to its true end. Its Creator was not simply a bare transcendent cause but one continuously related to creation in electing, redeeming, and glorifying the people of God in Jesus Christ (ﷺ) by the Holy Spirit. This is what represents the integrated view of the world and its people under the sovereign and free God who had normative authority over Western society for a millennium at least. In many respects, its influence has persisted even with a diminished orbit to the present day.<sup>28</sup>

But the force of “creation,” not only in this view but as generally harmonizing different concerns and grounding views of the world and humanity in God, gradually declined — to one primarily used within communities for which this view of creation retained its integrative and normative force. This was largely, it appears, because the difficulty of harmonizing increasing ranges of knowledge

and tracing the result to God simply became too great. Just as primitive peoples found that unity and completeness led to a vast and unwieldy patchwork of uneasy alliances in order that everything could find a place, so the medieval's desire to harmonize all knowledge and experience into a "theory of everything" became unmanageably complicated.<sup>29</sup>

Closely associated with this collapse was the growing power of knowledge as the proper goal of expert inquiry. Explorations were limited by reflectively-prescribed standards that precluded knowledge of the main elements upon which discussions of creation had been centered — "the world," "the soul," and "God." The goals of the new "science" left the possibility of the old "creation" in abeyance, together with all the God-laden possibilities for life they had fostered.<sup>30</sup>

With the dissolution of creation as harmonizing all in relation to God, there emerged a wide and growing range of concerns whose coherence with each other is limited to the light that each may cast on the others, and whose normativity is self-established. They are distributed amongst a burgeoning range of embracing disciplines: logic and mathematics, theoretical physics, cosmology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, earth sciences, biology, zoology, botany, anatomy, neurology, genetics, animal behavior and ecology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, linguistics, economics, political science, history and ethics, and all the concerns special to each of the foregoing. These have brought decisively new perspectives to the topics that had figured in ancient discussions of creation.<sup>31</sup>

Such explorations have brought a new depth of field to perceptions of the order and dynamics of the world and life itself. If creation had designated the preconditions relevant to life in the world and their ultimate constitution by a normative authority, this new depth of field penetrated to new aspects of these preconditions, to undreamed-of ways in which they were configured, leaving it unclear how these might cohere or be constituted by an ultimate authority. In effect, they outstripped the conceptions familiar to older views of creation, and the capacity of a view of creation to harmonize understanding of the world and humanity by reference to God.



At the same time, however, they offered new evidence of the possibility that the way human beings think may be made congruent with the structure of the world, a possibility that many would claim arises from the common origin of mind and physical world in the activity of God.<sup>32</sup>

One major area of advance has been in the field of cosmology, where the discovery in 1965 of cosmic background radiation has confirmed the origin of the world in a fiery explosion (the “Big Bang”) about 15 billion years ago. Either the view that this origin is instantaneous or the speculation that a momentary origin is offset by quantum effects may be accommodated in the assertion that God is ontologically responsible for the world’s existence. Much of the subsequent history of the universe is now traced as a process of differentiation in which chance and necessity combine in a free process, with its productiveness resting on delicate balances of physical laws; only in such a world could human beings emerge capable of self-conscious life (the anthropic principle). The view resembles Newton’s conviction that the (in his case mechanistic) order of the world matched the wise counsel of its designer. In this case, there is no clear hope for the future of cosmic history: it is uncertain whether the expansion from the original explosion, or the contraction of gravity, will prevail, the one bringing death by decay (into low-grade radiation) and the other death in a cosmic melting pot.<sup>33</sup>

A second major area of advance has been in the explanations offered in the time-neutral world of quantum physics, the invisible world of elementary particles, and their relations (molecules, atoms and subatomic particles). Quantum theory suggests that the microscopic world is indeterminate — that is, it is unclear how it may be measured: if the position of an electron is known, then its velocity cannot be known, and vice versa (the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle). This leads to the view that all observation and interpretation imply some degree of observer-participation, which disturbs the common sense notion of objectivity. The theory opens new possibilities for complementary interpretations and interactions beyond those previously available.<sup>34</sup>

A third area of new depth has been in the time-directional world of macroscopic physics. In two questions in particular, there have been striking developments. Einstein's theory of special relativity led to the conclusion that the simultaneity of events is not absolute, as if occurring in absolute time, but depends on the state of motion of the observer. As a result, Newton's absolute time was abolished, and time was related to space (space-time). A further stage was reached in Einstein's theory of general relativity, which connected matter and space-time. Both theories opened new insights into the nature of the contingency of the world.<sup>35</sup>

Other significant areas of exploration have been concerned with the order and dynamics of the world. Whereas the success of the sciences had been due to their practice of tracing complexities to simpler processes, new attention has been given to complexity and the spontaneous formation of order in chaos. Even thermodynamics, the loss of order that occurs as energy is used, was found to operate differently in non-equilibrium systems.<sup>36</sup>

The final issue that must be mentioned concerns the discoveries illuminating the nature and origins of animate and human life, reaching from evolutionary theory to the generation of new forms of biological organization at all levels, from DNA to the human mind. What have emerged are new depictions of the history of the emergence of life, and of the nature and organization of living organisms, which combine physico-chemical understanding with other forms of observation. No longer fixed forms completely created and ordered at the beginning, life appears as a dynamic history diversifying into different forms and kingdoms (bacteria, eukaryotic cells, fungi, plants, animals and humans), with differences not only genetic (arising from the inherent instability of genetic material) and inherently dynamic and inherently directionless but — in higher forms — related to physical, psychic, and cultural capacities and circumstances.<sup>37</sup>

With the coherence and grounding in the activity of God offered by the traditional Christian account of creation undermined by such explorations, there are new attempts to restore coherence by theoretical and narrative means. One tells of the growth of order

in the universe, providing a new scientific worldview that embraces and reconciles quantum physics, macroscopic physics, molecular and evolutionary biology, and modern neuroscience. Others seek a “theory of everything,” searching for unchanging constants of nature defined in many dimensions whose shadows are observable in the changing three-dimensional universe. Still others attempt to tell the “universe story,” a complex historical account of the emergence of the universe and world as they are known today. In each case, the coherence is inner-worldly and without reference to the ultimate authority constitutive of it, God.<sup>38</sup>

With approaches to creation (in the traditional and Christian meanings) left in abeyance by most people today, but increasing pressure, arising from supra-cognitive and ethical concerns, to recover an integrated and normative view of the preconditions for the universe and human life, it is likely that creation will regain its significance in future debate. Early signs of this are evident in the wide and lively interest in issues of science and theology, their affinities (historical, methodological, and conceptual), their mutual benefits, and the possibilities for mediating between them. The terms in which a renewal of understanding of creation is undertaken will be of particular importance. Unless the issue is confined to the position of delineating the preconditions and their grounding in normative authority, as authoritative for a private community, it will be necessary to incorporate the new insights that have arisen during recent centuries.<sup>39</sup>

If so, however, are these insights to be treated in fragmentary fashion as indicative of new possibilities for a natural theology? While that approach may allow the retrieval of elements of traditional views of creation, it will fail to provide an integrated account of the preconditions for the universe, the world, and human life as from God, of the sort provided previously. Following long-standing precedent, it is more likely that, in dialogue with new scientific understanding, a more comprehensive reconsideration of the conditions of the world as arising from God’s action will be necessary.<sup>40</sup>

One difficult preliminary factor confronted by those who wish to redevelop creation is the question of knowledge. It is axiomatic

for finite human beings that they can consider creation only from the “inside” or as “participants” — as those who stand within the limitations and possibilities that creation affords them. They are not denied access to creation and its derivation from God, however. They have the possibility of knowledge of creation so far as their position and capacities (by nature, history, and development) allow it, while they are also limited to what is available to them through their particular position in it.<sup>41</sup>

A major problem for the understating of creation is that the ultimate authority to which such understanding is referred is frequently so much less interesting and well-thought than the history and infrastructure of the universe, the world, and humanity. Fundamental to creation, therefore, is the existence of a creator from whose abundance the richness of creation as we know it originates and continues, as distinct from, say, a bare causal principle that might trigger or boost it. Such a creator is unbounded, incomparable, and radically alive, not an empty infinite but one with a fullness of being, truth, goodness, and beauty, and hence the complete source of all such things in creation. As a mystery that lies “beyond” the very relational field constituted by it, the fullness of the Creator is known only as that which actively constitutes this field. In other words, the character of the Creator is known through its activation of the relational field called creation.<sup>42</sup>

A second challenge is to discern the manner of the creative act of this Creator. It is the fullness of the Creator’s being, truth, goodness, and beauty that constitutes it as personal (“I am”) and free, free to be fully and radically self-giving through acting to originate that which is other than God. This is what gives rise to the notions of “world” and “humanity,” designating in the one case not a bounded totality characterized by its own self-independence and in the other case not a complete product with its own autonomy, but those that have their wholeness and freedom contingently, from the radical self-gift of God. That is, the nature, structure, and history of the world and humanity are found not in their self-standing but in the radical — but contingent — gift of being, truth, goodness, and beauty by the Creator.<sup>43</sup>

The question of origination that often dominates discussions of creation has to do with the radicality of these gifts by the Creator, not with forms of efficient causation no matter how powerful. Likewise, the notion of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation from nothing) derives from the denial of any source from which creation might have derived other than the Creator's existence, truth, goodness, and beauty. Both are expressions of the contingency of the relational field comprised by creation (that is, the universe, world, and humanity) on the radical self-gift of the Creator.<sup>44</sup>

A further challenge is to understand the implications for the structure and dynamics of the world. While it is important to stress the contingency of the world and humanity on the radical self-gift of God, such contingency must not be misunderstood. Being, truth, goodness, and beauty are fully realized in God, and are as constant in the self-giving of God as they are in God; they are faithfully given to the world and humanity. This is what confers upon both together (the relational field of world and humanity), as well as those that comprise each, an inalienable character, what is proper to their existence together, beyond which they cannot go with impunity. Furthermore, the gift establishes the quality of relations for the relational field, for elements of the world, and human beings separately and together: they are to be related as those who realize the being, truth, goodness, and beauty in others through care and compassion, not through self-serving, which makes others instrumental to inflated needs.<sup>45</sup>

What of the purpose of the world? It is important to recognize that in the constitution of creation, the being, truth, goodness and beauty that are fully realized in God cannot be completely given to finite beings, lest the finite be overcome by the infinite. The radical self-giving of God is for the world and humanity to be themselves — and true, good, and beautiful as such. The gift therefore forms the continuing course of the world and humanity, the future whose arrival depends on the readiness of the recipient to receive it. In other words, the fullness of God is present both in the gift of the condition of the world and humanity and in a purposive determination to which they may respond. Joining these two facets leads

to the paradoxical statement that the world and humanity may in time become what they already are.<sup>46</sup>

This awareness of creation provides it with some of its most remarkable features. The field of relations (of creation) that is the self-gift of God is a *plenum*, but not one fully realized. The first of these two features accounts for the seemingly infinite depth of the conditions that man knows as the world and humanity, that which inflames the interest of those who wish to find and know its fundamental character. The world and humanity are legitimate concerns for time-neutral observation. The second of the two accounts for the indefinite dynamism of the world and humanity, in which they are seen as cosmically and historically open. Because they are always moving toward an as-yet incomplete goal, they can be known only by anticipation. The world and humanity are legitimate concerns for time-filled observation. The intersection between the two concerns and kinds of investigation — time-neutral and time-filled — is always a murky one, each always implying the other.<sup>47</sup>

It was stressed earlier that God's self-gift is of the field of relations between God, the world, and humanity. The same coupling of firmly given conditions with cosmic and historical openness and purposiveness, is found in the field of relations within the world, humanity, and God, and between them. The radically loving self-gift of God does shift the boundaries of being, not only originating that which is separate but constituting a unity between God and the other that does not compromise the other's being in filling it. That shift, in which God embraces humanity in what the Hebrews called covenant, has many ramifications for the social relations between human beings and for the relations between humanity and the world. In each case it invests them with fixed obligations that are expressed as laws, and also indefinitely extends these responsibilities to include radical self-giving, compassion, and care for each other and the world — expressed as anticipations of need. This is the basis for the ethical implications of creation.<sup>48</sup>

As seen earlier, the personal character and freedom of the Creator arise from fullness of being, truth, goodness, and beauty. These characteristics arise within creation through the radical self-gift of

the Creator, and are found throughout the field of relations in humanity and with the world. Precisely because this fullness of personhood and the freedom that flows from it are given to human beings, and to the world itself, however, there is the possibility of a radical reversal in which the gift and its qualities (truth, goodness, and beauty) are alienated from their source (who is in turn treated as alienating) and taken as properties of the world and humanity. Even the constancy of the gift is taken over as these are considered intrinsic to those to whom God has given them. The result, evil in the case of the world and sin for humanity, radically dislocates all the relations proper to human beings in the world and fixes them within severely restricted conditions and purposes, thereby denying them both the true conditions of their being and the true future they might otherwise anticipate. Such a dislocation can only be fully remedied by the radical self-gift of the Creator in creation as redeemer, conferring new life in the presence of evil and sin. Creation, fully seen, is the precondition for redemption and eschatology.<sup>49</sup>

The above represents a snippet of the type of mental twists and turns, fogginess, and murkiness that encumbers the human mind when it chooses not to pay heed to the guidelines, the direction, the certainty, and the serenity that comes from hearing, reading, listening to, and understanding what Allah (ﷻ) has to say about creation. It is as if human beings are taxing themselves with the labor of their own minds when they refuse to accept the first-hand, reliable information that comes from Allah Himself. Even as the mental ruminations of the creationists are jumbled and befuddled, those of the secular and material mind as concerns their theory of evolution are even more so.

The term *evolution* refers most specifically to the major theory of modern biology that accounts for the origin of the diverse forms of living organisms. It also refers in a specific scientific sense to the modern understanding of the entire history of life on this planet and is the central theory of modern paleontology. Very broadly, the theory of evolution holds that over the course of time new forms of life emerge and develop from older forms by a natural process of change that occurs in interaction with the environment.

*Evolution* thus refers both to the historical emergence, development, and extinction of different forms of life, which can be traced in the paleontological record of fossils, and to the scientific theory concerning the process responsible for this historical development of living forms.<sup>50</sup>

Physics and astronomy apply the term *evolution* more generally, yet with scientific meaning, to the development of the universe as a whole. In the social sciences and the humanities, *evolution* is used loosely to refer to the historical development of human thought, cultures, and societies. *Evolution* can also have a philosophical meaning, connoting a developmental organic worldview quite opposed to any static or mechanistic view of reality.<sup>51</sup>

The standard theory of biological evolution may be outlined as follows. Individuals of the same species exhibit random variations in their morphological and physiological characteristics, the occurrence of which is accounted for by genetic theory. Under environmental pressures (competition for limited resources, changing environments, etc.), some of these variations confer an advantage in the struggle for survival. The individuals possessing them are better adapted to the demands of their environment, survive to produce offspring at a greater rate than those less well adapted (the survival of the fittest) and pass on the advantageous traits to their descendants. Over the course of time, through heredity, the entire population comes to possess the new traits and a new species has developed. This process of interaction between the environment and organisms is called “natural selection” (an analogical reference to the “artificial selection” for desired traits by animal and plant breeders).<sup>52</sup>

When applied to the history of life, evolution means that all species of living organisms have evolved from common ancestors, that the earliest multicellular organisms evolved from unicellular organisms, and that life itself evolved out of some yet unknown development in organic chemistry. Modern science understands biological evolution to occur within a more general context of cosmic evolution. Even though cosmic evolution is not yet well understood, there is widespread agreement in the sciences that the concept of “evolution” has grasped a fundamental feature of reality.<sup>53</sup>



The term *evolution* is usually associated with the name Charles Darwin (1809–1882). Although some scientists and philosophers before Darwin had proposed ideas of evolution, he was the first to work out a systematic theory of biological evolution and present it with extensive supporting evidence. The publication of *On the Origin of Species* (1859) inaugurated a revolutionary change in Western thought. In *The Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin applied the theory of evolution to the origin and development of the human species. Darwin was troubled by his inability to account for the random variations upon which natural selection operates. This difficulty was not resolved until the rediscovery in the early-20th century of the genetic theory of Gregor Mendel (1822–1882). The present theory of evolution, referred to as the “modern synthesis” (or neo-Darwinism), combines modern genetic theory with a modified Darwinian theory of evolution by natural selection.<sup>54</sup>

There are currently debates among biologists and paleontologists concerning exactly how evolution takes place (for example, gradual accumulation of changes versus the theory of punctuated equilibrium; whether genes are passively or actively involved in evolution, etc.). New understandings of evolution are also arising from the application of information theory and systems theory to the study of DNA and genetics. The scientific theory of evolution is still in the process of refinement. However, the assertion that evolution has taken place and is the key to the history of life is not in doubt. This is what scientists mean when they speak of evolution as a “fact.”<sup>55</sup>

The theory of evolution has affected all areas of thought, including philosophy, social and political theory, and economic theory. But by far its major social impact has been in the area of religion and the discipline of theology. Darwin’s theory challenged traditional Christian thought in several ways. For centuries Church Christianity had held that the truth of Christian faith was founded in revelation and reason: the divinely revealed truth is communicated in scripture and doctrine; and reason could arrive at a “natural theology,” proving that God exists and that the world is God’s creation. In Darwin’s time the argument from design in nature was the most

common form of “natural theology.” Darwin’s theory appeared to attack both these traditional bases of Christian faith.<sup>56</sup>

The evolutionary view of the origin and history of life clearly contradicted any literal interpretation of the creation narratives in scripture and seemed to imply that scripture presented inaccurate information. This was a direct challenge to the doctrines of biblical inerrancy, inspiration and divine revelation, as well as to the traditional historical basis of the doctrine of original sin (the Adam and Eve narrative). The argument from design in nature claimed that the complexity of organisms and their interactions with the environment were inexplicable unless the existence of a supreme intelligence that had designed and created them was inferred (as one could infer the existence of a watchmaker by examining a watch). Darwin’s theory of evolution was able to account for the supposed “marks of design” by a wholly natural process and thus undercut both the assumptions and the conclusions of classical natural theology. Furthermore, the theory of evolution gave an intellectually acceptable, if not comforting, solution to the problem of evil, which had always bedeviled the argument from design: if an impersonal, unintelligent, uncaring natural process is driving evolution then one can understand accidents, suffering, misery, death, and all “natural” evils to be the inevitable byproduct. Thus the doctrines of creation, providence, and even the existence of God were all called into question. The new evolutionary view of nature removed all the traditional assurances from the truth of Christian faith.<sup>57</sup>

Evolution also made Christianity’s traditional worldview untenable and called into question the traditional understanding of human origins and status. Christianity had long viewed the world as a fixed, static, hierarchically ordered, relatively young world, in which God’s care and goodness could be observed in the design of nature. Humans were seen as special creations of God, different from all animals and endowed with an immortal soul destined for eternal life. The meaning and purpose of human life was evident from humanity’s status at the top of the earthly hierarchy. Evolution now revealed a world immersed in change, a world unimaginably ancient, a world in which uncaring, impersonal forces, and mere change seem

to dominate the conditions of life. It placed humans squarely within the world of nature, not above it; found human origins in lower animals, not some special and direct creative act of God; and left the meaning and purpose of life shrouded in ambiguity.<sup>58</sup>

Evolution also posed a serious challenge to the basis for ethics. Christianity had taught that the basis for human conduct was in the revealed word of God. But if humans have evolved like all other animals, is not human conduct too under natural selection? Darwin and many others argued that no ethical principles could be derived from evolution (“social Darwinism” is not supported by the thought of Charles Darwin). Their age, convinced of the inevitable progress of humanity, was content to put reason in the place of divine revelation as the basis of ethics. But the 20th century has learned how easily reason may be twisted to serve self-interest and ideology. The problem of the basis of social ethics is with us yet today.<sup>59</sup>

Christianity has produced a wide range of responses to the challenges posed by evolution. At the most conservative end, fundamentalist and evangelical denominations have generally held that evolution conflicts with the truth of Christian faith and must be denied. Such denominations continue to adhere to a literal interpretation of scripture and have supported such movements as “scientific creationism,” which has caused much controversy in the USA in the past. But in all other denominations, evolution, though not the only cause, has been an important one in evoking a revolutionary change in Christian theology, perhaps the most important development since the European Middle Ages. These denominations have recognized that there are different kinds of truth and that scripture was not intended to be a textbook of scientific information. They have accepted the principles of modern biblical interpretation and have long abandoned biblical literalism. They hold that evolution is not necessarily incompatible with Christian faith, but differ in precisely how they articulate this position.<sup>60</sup>

In general theology has gone much further than the official positions of the churches in dealing with the problems posed by evolution. Some theologians have tried to insulate theology from evolution or any scientific theory by stressing the independence of

science and religion, arguing that they do not conflict because they are concerned with different aspects of reality and employ different methodologies, languages, and sources of data. Most theologians of the moderate and liberal denominations have found such a solution unacceptable for methodological and philosophical reasons. Instead they have reinterpreted the key doctrines of God, revelation, creation, and original sin so that they are compatible with an evolutionary worldview. New types of “natural theology” have developed, not claiming “proof” in the classical sense, but trying to show the reasonableness of theistic claims even in the context of an evolutionary worldview. Yet other theologians have integrated an evolutionary worldview into the very structures of their theologies, producing novel interpretations of Christian faith. The two best known examples of the latter approach are that of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) and “Process Theology,” which employs the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947). Most Christian theology has accepted the “fact” of evolution and is seeking interpretations of Christian faith that are compatible with what science discovers about the nature of reality.<sup>61</sup>

On the practical level, research in genetics is raising a host of ethical problems. Genetic manipulation will give societies, governments, and vested interests the capacity to take evolution into their own hands. It will be possible to design organisms, perhaps even humans, for various purposes and environments. What ethical principles will or ought to guide the use of such technology? Another pressing group of ethical problems concerns the human impact on other species and the physical environment. Evolution forces people to recognize their kinship with all living things and their relation to the environment. Until quite recently, humans have been oblivious to the detrimental effects of their industry and lifestyles on other living things and on their common environment. Man is already responsible for the extinction of many species and for having greatly accelerated the rate of extinction in the last centuries. Man’s continued pollution of the oceans and the atmosphere, his deforestation of the land masses, and the dangers of his nuclear weapons and power stations constitute an enormous threat to all

living things. The human species needs to reform its conduct. Since religion has always been the most powerful expression of the deepest values and ideals, as well as the guide for living, theology must articulate the spiritual and theological basis for environmental ethics and for man's treatment of animals. There appears to be a very pressing need for a persuasive theology of nature.<sup>62</sup>

Although theology has already done much in this regard, continued work is needed to articulate persuasively God's relation to and action within a world understood in evolutionary terms. Evolution, especially in its cosmic and philosophical senses, blurs the classical distinction between a nature ruled by law, and a history dominated by freedom and contingency. The laws of nature themselves may evolve; freedom and contingency appear to be fundamental features of reality, not restricted to humans and their history. In working out a contemporary doctrine of creation and providence, theology must deal with the freedom that is present throughout creation. Evolution reveals the contingency of the history of life, the role of chance and accident, and the massive occurrence of suffering and death. This raises in a very powerful and novel way the ancient problem of evil. It also raises a profound question concerning the meaning of life and of the evolutionary history of life. Theology must continue to recast its entire interpretation of Christian faith in order to answer the questions raised by evolution and this must include a thorough revision of the doctrine of God.<sup>63</sup>

Above all, theology (and Christian faith) must work to eliminate all anthropocentrism from its self-understanding and from its understanding of God's relation to the world. For millennia people have assumed that God is interested only in the human species and that nature is simply there for them to do with as they please. But evolution forces them to recognize that all life is related. Theology must interpret this to mean that, if the human species is of value in and of itself and to God, then all life and all creation is of value in and of itself and to God. Too much theology is still cast in anthropocentric moulds and has yet to learn from St. Francis of Assisi's simple but most profound syllogism: if God is creator and Jesus has revealed God as father, then all creatures are literally brothers and

sisters, God's children. Christian theology must work out the implications of this vision and hold it forward as the ideal to which man is called in thought and action.<sup>64</sup>

It is amazing how the human mind can literally cripple itself as it dances around social and *ghaybī* issues. No relief can be gained from the above speculations of creationism and the various theories of evolution. Nothing other than the straightforward and understandable words of Allah (ﷻ) can clear the air on the issue of creation and refinement, **“And of a certainty We did create you, and then We imaged you, then We said to the angles, “Prostrate yourselves to Adam...”**

There is nothing difficult to understand about this *āyah*. Nor is a long and tortured discourse necessary about how and when, where and why creation took place. Humanity simply has no experience or comprehensive knowledge pertaining to the dynamics and details of the act of creation. Therefore, let man know who he is and let him honor his thinking ability by appreciating Allah's creation and the information He provided about such creation.

### **What Is Known with Certainty about the Angels**

Allah (ﷻ) mentions the story of Adam (ﷺ) along with the story of Iblīs in seven different *sūrah*s of this holy Qur'an: *al-Baqarah*, *al-A'raf*, *al-Hijr*, *al-Isrā'* (*Banū Isrā'il*), *al-Kahf*, *Ṭā-Ha*, and *Ṣād*. The general gist of the story is that when Allah dignified Adam, Iblīs revealed his hostility and envy toward the former. Hence, Adam, and by extension, man in general are advised to always be vigilant of Iblīs and his subtle ways.

**And then We said to the angels, “Prostrate yourselves before Adam!” — whereupon they [all] prostrated themselves, except Iblīs: he was not among those who prostrated (7:11).**

Angels are another form of life created by Allah (ﷻ). They have their own functions and characteristics. The only knowledge

human beings have of them comes from Allah. Recognition of the reality of angels is a component of Islamic conviction and commitment to Allah, as stated in the *āyah* of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*,

**Committed is the Apostle to what has been revealed to him from his Sustainer, as are the committed Muslims — all are securely committed to Allah, His angels, His scriptures, His apostles [saying] we do not discriminate between them [the apostles] and declare our cognizance and obedience. [We appeal to] your amnesty, our Sustainer, and to You is destiny (2:285).**

The Almighty says concerning those who deny the existence of angels “...and he who denies [and rejects] Allah, His angels, His scriptures, His messengers, and the Final Day will have gone far astray” (4:136). Anyone who denies the existence of angels is objecting to the words of Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). Such a person is a *kāfir*, as there is no interpretational loophole on this matter. There is no uncertainty on this matter: the affirmation of angels is an integral part of this *dīn* as has been the consensus of all Muslims at all times.

In the Qur’an, the angels are mentioned in some 75 *āyāt* of 33 different *sūrah*s. The Prophet’s discourses also underscore the conviction and belief in angels. During his life, the Prophet (ﷺ) encountered angels in several incidents, most of which occurred throughout the receipt of revelation from on high. The Prophet explained that even persons who are not prophets can encounter angels on occasions, provided they are highly and remarkably conscious of Allah (ﷻ).

Ḥanzalah ibn al-Rabi’ah complained to the Prophet (ﷺ) about his *īmān* saying that when he is in the latter’s presence, listening to issues pertaining to Paradise and the Fire, it (his *īmān*) is one thing, but when he leaves and gets enmeshed with his family members he feels that his *īmān* is not what it was when he was in the presence of the Prophet. So, Ḥanzalah thought that this fluctuation of *īmān* may be a sign of *nifāq*. To that (concern), the Prophet answered,

*By He within whose hands I am, if you were to maintain your level of consciousness as it is when you are with me [Muhammad] then the angels would shake hands with you in your beds and in your pathways. Rather [Ḥanzalah!] take one hour at a time [or one step at a time... and he repeated this last statement two more times].<sup>65</sup>*

As part of Allah's grand wisdom, people and societies receive prophets and messengers who deliver to them guidance from the Most High. These prophets and messengers are in communication with angels who, more or less, are emissaries or a "medium" between Allah (ﷻ) and man. The angels carry Allah's message to the Prophets (ﷺ) and may teach them, after which they may perform their role in accordance with revelation and inspiration,

**He sends down angels with the spirit of His command to whomever He wills of His subjects so that they warn [people] by saying there is no god except Me, so be mindful and actionable about my power presence (16:2).**

Another facet of Allah's awe-inspiring wisdom requires angels to be utilized for functions pertaining to human life, such as the commencement of life in fetuses, the monitoring of human activity, and the maintenance of a vital balance therein; the moment of death is also an angelic procedure. Thus, angels are involved in human life and livelihood. They, in a way undetectable by man, are part of some of the actions he is involved in. They also test his will as to whether he affirms or denies their presence. Therefore, Allah (ﷻ) told man about their existence and presence, and expects him to acknowledge them.

People have generally held two views concerning angels. In the first category are those who follow the Prophets and Messengers (ﷺ); they acknowledge and affirm the existence of angels because they have certain information via scripture about this fact. And all prophets demanded from their followers the affirmation of angels. The second category, a grouping outside the pale of scripture and



prophets, may be classified into (i) those who are neutral on the subject of angels, neither confirming nor denying their presence; (ii) those who substantiate the presence of angels, such as some spiritualists or ancient philosophers; and (iii) those who are simply materialists, denying all facts that are not within the scope of matter and their physical senses.

Man is incapable of knowing as a matter of certainty anything about angels except what has come to him via Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). Angels cannot be subjected to technological analysis in a laboratory. Therefore, to understand who the angels are as well as humanly possible, the authentic information from scripture and prophet will have to suffice. And so, the following can be ascertained from this literature,

1. Angels are created from light, "*Angels were created from light, jinn were created from flames of fire, and Adam was created as described to you.*"<sup>66</sup>
2. Angels may be in the close proximity of human beings, but the latter are not able to see the former. The angel Gabriel (ﷺ) would come to the Prophet (ﷺ) while people were around him, yet no one was able to see him. In a hadith, the Prophet said,

"O *Ā'ishah!* This is *Jibril* who greets you with peace."  
She said, "And peace to him and Allah's grace. And he sees what I cannot see."<sup>67</sup>

3. Angels are capable of transformation, transmutation, and adaptation. This has been stated in the Qur'an and in the Hadith. The following hadith, narrated by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, corroborates an angel appearing in the figure of an unknown person,

While we were sitting in the company of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) a man wearing sparkling white clothes and with pitch black hair appeared. There was no trace of travel on him; and not one of us knew him. He sat in the presence of the Prophet

(ﷺ) with his knees corresponding to the Prophet's knees. He then placed the palms of his hands on his thighs and said, "O Muhammad! Tell me what Islam is." So the Messenger (ﷺ) said, "*Islam is to bear witness that there is no deity/authority except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and to standardize/socialize the ṣalāh, and to systematize the zakāh, and to fast Ramaḍān, and to journey on a pilgrimage to the House [of Allah] if one is able to do so.*" He [the man] said, "You've spoken the truth" ('Umar relates that they [those sitting with the Prophet] were all surprised about [the man] asking him [the Prophet] and then endorsing his answer).

He [the man] followed up, "Then, tell me about *īmān*." He [the Prophet] responded, "*To commit yourself to Allah, and His angels, and His scriptures, and His apostles, and the Final Day, and Allah's overall will, good or bad [according to man's limited perception].*" He [the man] confirmed, "What you said is true," and continued, "So tell me what *ihsān* is." He [the Prophet] replied, "*To conform to Allah as if you are seeing Him, for if you do not see Him, He definitely sees you.*"

He [the man] pressed on, "So, tell me about the Final Hour." He [the Prophet] answered, "*The questioner does not know more than the questioned.*" He [the man] ended with, "So tell me about its signs." He [the Prophet] said, "*When a bondwoman gives birth to her overlord, and when you see those who are barefooted, scantily clad, indigent, and shepherders competing with each other to build skyscrapers.*"

['Umar relates], "I waited for three [days] and then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to me, 'Do you know who the questioner was?' I said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' [And so] he [the Prophet] said, 'Verily, it was Gabriel who came to teach you all the matters of your *dīn*.'"<sup>68</sup>

The following *āyah* relates the coming of the archangel Jibril (Gabriel) in the image of a man to Maryam (ﷺ) while she was in seclusion,

**And call to mind, through this divine Writ, Mary. Lo! She withdrew from her family to an eastern place and kept herself in seclusion from them, whereupon We sent to her Our angel of revelation, who appeared to her in the shape of a well-made human being. She exclaimed, “Verily, I seek refuge from you with the Most Gracious! [Approach me not] if you are conscious of Him!” [The angel] answered, “I am but a messenger of your Sustainer, [who says], ‘I shall bestow upon you the gift of a son endowed with purity.’” (19:16–19).**

There is information in the Qur’an about the angels who were hosted by Ibrāhīm (ﷺ),

**And has the story of Abraham’s honored guests ever come within your awareness? When those [heavenly heralds] came to him and bade him peace, he answered, “[And upon you] peace!” — [saying to himself], “They are strangers.” Then he turned quietly to his household, and brought forth a fat [roasted] calf, and placed it before them, saying, “Will you not eat?” [And when he saw that the guests declined], he became apprehensive of them; [but] they said, “Fear not” — and gave him the glad tiding of [the birth of] a son who would be endowed with deep knowledge (51:24–28).**

Qur’anic *āyāt* also describe those angels who came to Lūṭ (ﷺ) to destroy his people. These angels appeared to him as beautiful and charming young men. Their features and physique engaged and attracted the perverted ones from Lūṭ’s people,

And when Our messengers [from heaven] came to Lūṭ, he was sorely grieved on their account, seeing that it was beyond his power to shield them; and he exclaimed, “This is a woeful day!” And his people came running to him, impelled toward his house [by their desire], for they had ever been wont to commit [such] abominations. Said [Lūṭ], “O my people! [Take instead] these daughters of mine: they are purer for you [than men]! Be, then, conscious of Allah, and disgrace me not by [assaulting] my guests. Is there not among you even one right-minded man?” (11:77–78).

And then, there is the parable of the angels who appeared in the shape of two antagonistic men during the time of Prophet David (ﷺ),

And yet, has the story of the litigants come within your awareness — [the story of the two] who surmounted the wall of the sanctuary [in which David prayed]? As they came upon David, and he shrank back in fear from them, they said, “Fear not! [We are but] two litigants. One of us has wronged the other: so judge you between us with justice, and deviate not from what is right, and show [both of] us the way to rectitude (38:21–22).

4. Angels are created in a way that they cannot disobey Allah (ﷻ). They always listen and obey; therefore, they cannot be guilty of sins. Allah described them as being always humble in their conformity to Him; they praise Him endlessly,

They [the angels] speak not until He has spoken to them, and [whenever they act], they act at His behest (21:27);

For, unto Him belong all [beings] that are in the heavens and on earth; and those [angels] that are with Him are never too proud to conform to and worship Him and never grow weary [thereof]: they extol His limitless glory by night and by day, never flagging [therein] (21:19–20);

And as your Sustainer said to the angels, “I am rendering a successor on earth.” They said, “Shall You render on it those who will corrupt it and shed blood while we extol You and hallow Your name?” He said, “I know what you do not know” (2:30).

5. Angels do not have a gender. There are *āyāt* that assail the *kāfirs* for attributing a gender definition to the angels,

And they [the *kāfirs*] made the angels who are the servants of the Most Gracious to be females. Have they witnessed their creation? We will register their affirmation, and they will be held accountable (43:19).

6. Angels are able to travel and transcend the heavens and earth — ascending and descending — without being subject to physical laws such as gravity or magnetic and electrical fields, “...the angels go up to Him as does the *Rūḥ* in an [angelic] day with an approximation of fifty-thousand years” (70:4).
7. Angels fear Allah (ﷻ) even though they do not disobey Him and are always in compliance with Him,

...and the thunder extols His limitless glory and praises Him, and [so do] the angels, in awe of Him... (13:13);

For, before Allah prostrates itself all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth — every beast

that moves, and the angels: [even] these do not bear themselves with false pride; they fear their Sustainer high above them, and do whatever they are bidden to do (16:49–50).

8. Angels were created before man. This is confirmed throughout the Qur'an in the creation of Adam (ﷺ), in which circumstance the angels say to Allah (ﷻ), **“Do you constitute on earth those who will disturb its order and shed blood...?”** (2:30). The order to the angels from Allah to prostrate themselves to Adam was after his creation and making.
9. Angels have doubled, tripled, quadrupled wings or more,

**All praise is due to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, who causes the angels to be [His] message-bearers, endowed with wings, doubled, tripled, or quadrupled... (35:1).**

10. The number of angels, as they are numerous and abundant, is not known to anyone but Allah (ﷻ). They are, after all, the facilitators and administrators of Allah's will; and they are His legions and troops, **“...and no one knows your Sustainer's troops besides Him”** (74:31). And in a hadith, *“The heavens are abuzz, as they should be. There is not one footstep vacant of an angel either prostrating or in genuflection.”*<sup>69</sup>
11. Allah (ﷻ) tasks the angels with the communication and revelation of scripture to prophets, or for other undertakings, as mentioned in *āyah* 35:1, quoted above.

From what is known in the Qur'an and hadith literature about angels, particular functions are assigned to specific angels,

1. There are those grand angels including Jibrīl and Mikā'il (Gabriel and Michael – ﷺ). In reference to these two, Allah (ﷻ) says, **“Whoever is an enemy of Allah and His angels and His emissaries and of Gabriel and Michael, then Allah is the enemy of the kāfirs”** (2:98).

Gabriel (جبرئيل) is the emissary who communicates revelation to the messengers and prophets,

**Now, behold, this [divine Writ] has indeed been bestowed from on high by the Sustainer of all the worlds: trustworthy divine inspiration [the angel Gabriel] has alighted with it from on high upon your heart [O Muhammad], so that you may be among those who preach in the clear Arabic tongue (26:192–195).**

He stands out in a special position among the rest of the angels for he has been distinguished by being mentioned as the herald of them all. Gabriel is also specified as the supporter of the Prophet (ﷺ) in case his wives wane or wither from him,<sup>70</sup>

**[Say, O Prophet], “Would that you two turn unto Allah in repentance, for the hearts of both of you have swerved [from what is right]! And if you uphold each other against him [who is Allah’s message-bearer, know that] Allah Himself is his Protector, and [that], therefore, Gabriel, and all the righteous among the committed Muslims, and all the [other] angels will come to his aid” (66:4).**

Gabriel (جبرئيل) was designated, by some accounts, in the Qur’an as Rūḥ al-Qudus (the essence of sanctity, holiness, and purity) — a great honor, “...and We vouchsafed to Jesus, the son of Mary, clear evidence and supported him with Rūḥ al-Qudus” (2:87). The acknowledgment and admiration of Gabriel are strung together in the following *āyah*,

**He [Gabriel] is a magnanimous emissary, possessive of power, [a power] well-established with the Lord of the Throne; obeyed and then trustworthy.**

**And your [angelic] companion is not delusional  
(81:19–22).**

2. It is understood that Isrāfil (﷉) is the angel who blows into the Horn of Doom (on the Last Day on earth). And consequently all life on earth and in the heavens will come to an end, except for those Allah (ﷻ) has excluded; these will expire in a manner that is not triggered by that blow of the horn. Then will commence the second birth of man in a life after earthly life,

**And [on that Day], the trumpet [of judgement] will be sounded, and all [creatures] that are in the heavens and all that are on earth will fall down senseless, unless they be such as Allah wills [to exempt]. And then it will sound again — and lo! standing [before the Seat of Judgement], they will begin to see [the truth]! (39:68).**

Here is where the curious human mind goes into overdrive, wanting to visualize this trumpet or horn. However, in the absence of precise and evidentiary information for a final word on the description of the trumpet, the authentic details in the Qur'an and hadith literature should be enough to satisfy man's spirit of inquiry and restrain his fascinating and inquisitive mind from going off on tangents. Some Islamic historical sources suggest that Isrāfil is the angel of death.

3. According to the prevailing current of thought, 'Azrā'il (﷉) is the angel of death; it appears that he is the head-angel of those angels who are divinely entrusted to trigger the moment of death,

**Say, “[One day], the angel of death who has been given charge of you will gather you, and then unto your Sustainer you will be brought back” (32:11).**



4. Certain angels have the responsibility of carrying the Throne,

...and the sky will be rent asunder — for, frail will it have become on that Day — and the angels [will appear] at its ends, and, above them, eight will bear aloft on that Day the throne of your Sustainer's almightiness... (69:16–17).

In addition, there are angels who teem around the Throne,

And you will see the angels surrounding the throne of [Allah's] almightiness, extolling their Sustainer's glory and praise. And judgement will have been passed in justice on all [who had lived and died], and the word will be spoken, "All praise is due to Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds!" (39:75).

5. There will be angels in Heaven as the following *āyah* explains,

...gardens of perpetual bliss that they shall enter together with the righteous from among their parents, their spouses, and their offspring; and the angels will come to them from every gate [saying], "Peace be upon you, because you have persevered!" (13:23–24).

6. Similarly, there are angels overlooking Hell, otherwise referred to as the *ḡabānīyah* (hellish chastisement). In particular, according to some Islamic interpretations, 19 angels will be presiding over Saqar, a section of Hell,

And what could make you conceive what hellfire (Saqar) is? It does not preserve anything placed in it until that is destroyed, and then this cycle repeats [perpetually], [and it is] visible [at a dis-

tance] to mortal beings. Over it are nineteen [angels or powers]. For We have caused none but angelic powers to lord over the fire [of Hell]; and We have not caused their number to be anything but a trial for those who are bent on denying the truth... (74:27–31).

The word *zabāniyah* alludes to the agency of deterrence for those who would consider rebelling against Allah (ﷻ) in earthly life, thereby sealing their fate of doom,

No, if he desists not, We shall most surely drag him down upon his forehead — the lying, rebellious forehead! — and then let him summon [to his aid] the counsels of his own [spurious] wisdom, [the while] We shall summon the forces of [angelic] grisly chastisement! (96:15–18).

The headmaster of these angels of punishment in Hell is, according to some narratives, Mālik (ﷻ),

And they will cry, “O you [angel] who rules [over Hell]! Let your Sustainer put an end to us!” — whereupon he will reply, “Verily, you must live on [in this state]...” (43:77).

7. The angels that are entrusted with human functions are those who breathe life into the fetus, register a person’s deeds, account for his sustenance, and the state of happiness or misery he is in — and this is corroborated by the following hadith,

*The creation of one of you takes a composition of forty days in the abdomen of the mother as a nuṭfaḥ. Then it turns into an ‘alaqaḥ in the same amount of time, and then it turns into a mudghaḥ in the same amount of time. Then Allah sends it an angel with four words: he*

*writes down the deeds, the provisions [in life], the duration [of life], and the condition — either cheerful or cheerless. And then the rūḥ is breathed into it.*<sup>71</sup>

8. Angels are assigned the task of monitoring a person's deeds. They preserve, count, and register all the actions, over a lifetime, of he to whom they are assigned. That they have the capacity, determination, and constancy to do this should boggle the mind of a conscious and thinking person. Every person has two angels that keep tabs on what he is doing, and they regularly and consistently file their reports. However, the person under observation cannot sense what is going on around him, even though it consumes every moment of his life. The human mind errs when it tries to go into the details of this fact, and so to prevent it from running circles around matters beyond its range of comprehension, the wisest course is to simply accept this information and the reality it encapsulates on the authority of Allah (ﷻ),

**[And so], whenever the two demands [of his human nature] come face to face, contending from the right and from the left, not even a word can he utter but there is a watcher with him, ever-present (50:17–18);**

**No, [O men], but you [are lured away from Allah whenever you are tempted to] give the lie to [Allah's] judgement! And yet, verily, there are ever-watchful forces over you, noble, recording, aware of whatever you do (82:9–12).**

9. Allah's angels are His emissaries on mission into the human dimension and lifetime,

**And He alone holds sway over His subjects. And He sends forth heavenly [angelic] forces to watch**

over you until, when death approaches any of you, Our messengers cause his earthly life to come to an end: and they do not overlook [anyone] (6:61).

In summary, then, angels are ethereal beings with whom man can have no sensory contact in the normative course of his life. As they have a light-like form, they can take on different shapes and countenances. They have been granted miraculous and thoroughgoing powers for the weighty responsibilities they have to discharge and the ongoing functions they have to manage. They are close to Allah (ﷻ) and were designed to obey Him; the notion of disobedience does not exist within their spirit of being, and so they do what they are commanded to by the Most High. They require neither food, nor drink; they do not have a gender and they do not procreate, mate, or reproduce. Since they are honorable and noble beings, it is only fitting that they be chosen as the emissaries of their Sustainer's messages to the world of man. They function in accordance with their God-given nature and assignments, as He wills.

### Fact and Fiction about the Jinn

Now that angels are more completely understood in light of Qur'anic guidance, consider the original *āyah* once more, taking note of the other participants in the event that introduced man, **“Then We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate yourselves before Adam!’ — and they did prostrate, except for Iblīs: he was not of those who prostrated...”** As it turns out, one entity who was not angelic refused to obey the order of Allah (ﷻ), and therefore refused to prostrate himself before Adam (ﷺ). Referred to here as Iblīs, he is mentioned 11 times in the Qur'an, with this being the second time after the mention in *Sūrah al-Baqarah*. That Iblīs was not angelic, even though he was at the time within the heavenly company that was ordered to prostrate itself to Adam, is known from the *āyah* in *Sūrah al-Kahf*,

**And [remember] when We told the angels, “Prostrate yourselves before Adam,” they all prostrated themselves, save Iblīs: he was of the jinn, he [refused and thus] deviated from Allah’s command (18:50).**

Given that the jinn and the angels are two distinct and different creations, it would be instructive at this point, not unlike the previous section, to provide some detail from the Qur’an and hadith literature about the nature of the jinn. Most people of different persuasions who consider themselves adherents of scriptures and followers of prophets say they believe in the existence of the jinn. Since the ever-truthful prophets provided their peoples and societies information about these beings, then their followers have no option but to affirm the jinn as a fact of universal reality.

The give and take on this matter in times past and present has centered around “proving” the existence of the jinn. Those who take issue with the lively presence of another intelligent species have no solid argument for their case. For the doubters, the bottom line is that if these jinn cannot be verified by the human senses or some other material criterion, then they do not exist. However, what is well-known from the Qur’an and experience is that the overall domain of existence cannot be contained, circumscribed, or defined by the capacity of human senses. In this instance, Allah the Creator (ﷻ) is giving information about the existence and appearance of the jinn. In Volume 12 of this *tafsīr*, the UFO phenomenon was discussed at length, and this ought to be enough in its inferences and conclusions to point to the existence of other intelligent forms of life.

Rationally speaking, no argument in the discursive and reasoning mind can categorically conclude that the existence of the jinn is illogical or inconsistent with the human intellect or method of reasoning. So, this leaves two possibilities — either the sensory proof of the jinn’s existence, and thus far there has not been any such proof of their existence or nonexistence; or conclusive, specific, and definite reliable information that confirms the existence of the jinn. And the latter is what exists in the incontestable scripture of the

Qur'an. Hence, at least the committed Muslims affirm the existence of the jinn because the information comes from the Creator and they can have no doubt about Him or about His Scripture.

Moving beyond the question of existence, in a sense the jinn are like angels, for man cannot know anything about them except what Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) tell him. Human beings can have no systemic contact with the jinn in a way that satisfies their physical standards of proof; therefore they cannot rely on any number of scientific approaches to prove or disprove the reality of the jinn. This means that scriptural texts will have to satisfy the inquiring mind, and hence the following is known,

1. The jinn are not angels. Lower on the scale of creation than angels, they were created from the flare of the fire. In contrasting the physiology of humans with the “physiology” of the jinn, the words of the Qur'an indicate, **“He has created man out of sounding clay, like pottery, whereas the jinn He has created out of a confusing flame of fire (55:14–15).** This “creational” difference was expressed by Iblis as he tried to defend his position of refusing to bow down to Adam (ﷺ), **“I am better than he [Adam]: You created me from fire whereas him You created out of clay” (7:12).** In the discordant thinking of Iblis a “higher level” of creation needs not show respect to a “lower level.”
2. The jinn were created before intelligent men,

**And, indeed, We have created man out of sounding clay, out of dark slime transmuted — whereas the jinn, We had created [long] before that, out of the fire of scorching winds (15:26–27).**

3. The jinn procreate and have offspring,

**And [remember that] when We told the angels, “Prostrate yourselves before Adam,” they all prostrated themselves, except Iblis: he [too] was one of those jinn, but then he turned away from**

his Sustainer's command. Will you, then, take him and his scions for [your] masters instead of Me, although they are your foes? How vile an exchange on the evildoers' part? (18:50).

Similar to humans, the jinn have a gender distinction. In the following *āyah* there is a reference to jinn who are men, and if there are men there must be women for the extension of life,

Yet, [it has always happened] that dynamic persons from among the humans would seek refuge with dynamic individuals from among the jinn: but these only increased their [burden and] confusion (72:6).

4. In the *āyah* below, there are those who infer “his kindred” to refer to the jinn, and thus they conclude that the jinn are able to see men but not vice versa,

O children of Adam! Do not allow Satan to seduce you in the same way he caused your ancestors to be driven out of the garden; he deprived them of the garment [of God-consciousness] in order to make them aware of their nakedness. Verily he and his kindred can see you where you cannot see them (7:27).

Though this is the general rule, it does not mean that there cannot be any exceptions, and hence from time to time man may sense or “see” these jinn.

5. The jinn are intelligent and responsible creatures who, like men, are endowed with the freedom of choice. They, too, are expected to conform to Allah (ﷻ) and to stay away from *kufr*. There are a number of places in the Qur'an where both the jinn and man are coupled together as Allah instructs and teaches,

And [tell them that] I have not created the jinn and men to any end other than to conform to Me. [But withal], no sustenance do I ever demand of them, nor do I demand that they feed Me... (51:56–57);

[And thus will Allah continue], “O community of jinn and humans! Have you not been approached by apostles from among you who elaborate on My illustration [of power and authority] and who warn you of the coming of this Day?” They replied, “We bear witness against ourselves”; and they were enticed by [the leisure] of worldly life, and they bore witness against their own selves saying they were in denial [of Allah] (6:130);

Say, “If all mankind and all the jinn would come together with a view to producing the like of this Qur’an, they could not produce its like even if they were to exert all their strength in aiding one another!” (17:88).

6. Because the jinn have been granted freedom of choice, they can either be committed and obedient to Allah (ﷻ) or in denial of Him and disobedient. Albeit they appeared to have been the cohorts of Iblīs at the time he broke away from Allah, the commitment of some of them is apparent from the following *āyāt*,

Say, “It has been revealed to me that some of the jinn gave ear [to this divine Writ], and thereupon said [to their fellow beings], ‘Verily, we have heard a wondrous discourse, guiding toward consciousness of what is right; and so We have come to believe in it [and commit to it]. And we shall never ascribe divinity to anyone beside our Sustainer...’” (72:1–2).



The jinn themselves had made reference to Satan as being their own maniacal and insane one,

“And [now we know] that the demoniac among us was wont to say outrageous things about Allah...” (72:4).

And they described themselves in the following manner,

Yet [it is true] that among us [the jinn] are such as have surrendered themselves to Allah, just as there are among us such as have abandoned themselves to wrongdoing. Now as for those who surrender themselves to Him, it is they who have attained to consciousness of what is right; but as for those who abandon themselves to wrongdoing, they are indeed but fuel for [the fires of] Hell! (72:14–15).

7. Like man, the jinn will be in attendance on the Day of Judgment and will be held accountable for their deeds, deserving either reward or punishment,

And on the Day when He shall gather them [all] together, [He will say], “O you who have lived in close communion with [evil] jinn! A great many [other] human beings have you ensnared!” And those of the humans who were close to them will say, “O our Sustainer! We did enjoy one another’s fellowship [in life]; but [now that] we have reached the end of our term — the term You have laid down for us — [we see the error of our ways]!” [But] He will say, “The Fire shall be your abode therein to abide — unless Allah wills it otherwise.” Verily, your Sustainer is wise, all-knowing (6:128).

...but [for those who refuse to avail themselves of His guidance], that word of your Sustainer shall be fulfilled, “Most certainly will I fill Hell with jinn as well as with humans, all together!” (11:119).

- Punishment is due upon all who are responsible, have freedom of will and choice, and then disobey and dishonor Allah (ﷻ).
8. The jinn have extraordinary skills and outstanding proficiencies in some respects. When Allah (ﷻ) put some of these jinn in the service of Sulaymān (ﷺ), they were involved in areas of “structural engineering” as well as in maritime activities, not to mention, in today’s parlance, industrial pursuits of an “infrastructural” nature. They also contributed to the fine arts, sculpting statues and images, etc. In speaking about Sulaymān, the Qur’an says,

**And so We made subservient to him [Sulaymān] the wind, so that it gently sped at his behest whithersoever he willed, as well as all frenetic powers [that We made to work for him] — every kind of builder and diver... (38:36–37).**

One of the jinn serving Sulaymān claimed he could transport the throne of the Queen of Sheba (Bilqīs) over a long distance within the (miniscule) time it would take his interlocutor to stand up from a sitting position,

**Said a hyperactive one from the jinn [subject to Sulaymān’s command], “I shall bring it to you before you rise from your council-seat — for, behold, I am powerful enough to do it, [and] worthy of trust!” (27:39).**

Another *āyah* speaks volumes about the accomplishments and proficiencies of the jinn in Sulaymān’s dominion,

**They [the jinn] made for him [Sulaymān] whatever he wished of sanctuaries, and statues, and basins as [large as] great watering-troughs, and cauldrons firmly anchored (34:13).**

9. The jinn, before the advent of Muhammad (ﷺ) were capable of “tuning in” to the communication of angels. They may have been able to transmit some of what they “heard” to their human “contacts.” This advanced level of cosmic communication is cited in the following *āyāt*,

**“And [so it happened] that we [the jinn] reached out toward heaven, but we found it filled with mighty guards and flames, notwithstanding that we were established in positions [that we had thought well-suited] to listening to [whatever secrets might be in] it: and anyone who now [or ever] tries to listen will [likewise] find a flame lying in wait for him!” (72:8–9).**

10. How the jinn nourish themselves is not known with certainty, even though there are some “hadiths” saying, in effect, that the jinn feed on bones, animal manure, and coal or carbonized vegetable matter.<sup>72</sup>
11. That the jinn are capable of appearing in man’s bio-physical domain is confirmed by their appearing and speaking to Sulaymān (Solomon) and him speaking with them.

From some of the *āyāt* above, it appears that the jinn can have an impact on human life; after all, some from among them ally with evil humans in their common enmity against prophets, and by extension, those who follow in the latter’s footsteps,

**And thus it is that against every prophet We have set up as enemies the evil forces from among social humans as well as from the jinn that whisper to one**

**another glittering half-truths meant to delude the mind. But they could not do this unless your Sustainer had so willed: stand, therefore, aloof from them and from all their false imagery! (6:112).**

However, their influence seems to be restricted to subtle and indirect channels; nonetheless, there is no way to ascertain the pattern of this indistinct control over man. From the broad conception of the vast majority of Muslims and Islamic scholars, past and present, the prevalent view is that the jinn may from time to time interfere with a particular individual's personal life. Because the jinn are of a different nature, another dimension, a unique species unto themselves, and separate matrix, human beings cannot discover with certainty how they step into an individual's exclusive life.

There exists an Arabian mythology about the jinn as supernatural spirits below the level of angels and devils; possible examples of these spirits include the *ghawl* (a treacherous spirit with a silent-killer character), the *'ifrīt* (a restive spirit), and other classes of jinn. Some have said that the jinn are beings of flame or air who are capable of assuming human or animal form, and are said to dwell in inanimate objects, underneath the earth, in the air, and in fire. Other descriptions suggest that they possess the bodily needs of human beings and can be killed, but are free from all physical restraints; and that they delight in punishing humans for any harm done to them, intentionally or not, and are said to be responsible for many diseases and all kinds of accidents. At the same time, those human beings who know the proper magical procedure can exploit the jinn to their advantage. Belief in the jinn was common in early Arabia, where they were thought to inspire poets and soothsayers. The jinn, especially through their association with magic, have always been favorite figures in North African, Egyptian, Syrian, Persian, and Turkish folklore and are often found at the center of some popular literature (folk tales and oral narratives).

There is considerable ambiguity and uncertainty between the jinn who are created from the flames or flares of fire and Satan who is created from the fire itself. The Qur'an indicates that Satan has

influence over man, but only when man gives him access. But as to how the jinn may “tag on” to Satan and thus indirectly have sway over man is open to conjecture.

One of the issues that brings this into focus is the practice of exorcism, a ritual act performed to force evil spirits to abandon an object, place, or person; technically, it is a ritual used in many traditions of Christianity to expel demons from persons who have come under their power. The term *exorcism* comes from the Greek verb *exorkisein*, meaning *to charge solemnly* or *to command*, in this case, a demonic spirit which, it was believed, had taken possession of an individual. The origin of this practice can be traced to ancient Persian religion which, having a dualistic worldview, made much of evil powers and offered ways to overcome them. In the Theravada Buddhist tradition, the Phi (Thailand) or Nats (Myanmar/Burma) are expelled by specialists who are not monks. There is only one instance of exorcism in Old Testament literature (1 Samuel, 16:14–23), where David (ﷺ) is able to pacify the troubled Saul.

In early Judaism, however, perhaps under Persian influence, interest in the demonic world became morbidly excessive. There is some evidence of Jewish exorcists in the Gospel (Luke, 11:19, 9:49; Mark, 9:38) and the New Testament (Acts of the Apostles, 19:13). The later Greco-Roman world produced its exorcists, sometimes using oriental or Semitic loanwords. This suggests that exorcism entered Greco-Roman popular religion from the East, perhaps not until the second or third century CE.

The Synoptic (corresponding) Gospels attributed to Sts. Matthew, Mark, and Luke (but not the Fourth Gospel, which is strangely silent about demons) record Jesus (ﷺ) as performing such exorcisms by a word. Jesus evidently attached an importance to this side of his ministry as a demonstration of the nearness of God’s rule (Luke, 11:20) and in fulfillment of Old Testament prophetic expectation (Matthew, 11:4–6; Mark, 7:31–37). His followers, and others as well, drove out demons “in his name.” Jewish witness to Jesus’ practice of “sorcery,” a reference to his reputation as an exorcist, is reported in the Talmud.

The early church emphasized miracle-working powers, with exorcism as part of the same demonstration of divine power (Acts, 5:16, 8:7, 19:12) at work over Jewish and pagan magic. One other case of St. Paul expelling an evil spirit is on record (Acts, 16:18), but the motive there seems more one of compassion in the face of human need. In the first two centuries of the Christian era, the power of exorcism was considered a special gift that might be bestowed on anyone, lay or cleric. Around 250CE there appeared a class of the lower clergy, called exorcists, who specialized in performing this function. About the same time, exorcism became one of the ceremonies preparatory to baptism, and it has remained a part of the Roman Catholic baptismal service.

All of the above — from Arabian mythology, to Persian religions, to the Greco-Roman cultures, to the information from today’s understanding of the Old and New Testaments — are human experiences of either exaggeration or ignorance about how Satan exerts influence over human life. What is known for sure is the information given in this Qur’an. Categorically speaking, Satan and demons do not have any influence on man’s free will. Allah (ﷻ) has placed a barrier between this capability of a human being and their “tinkering.” Hence, it is Allah’s will to “guarantee” man’s freedom of choice. To this end, Allah says in no uncertain terms to Satan, **“Verily, you [Satan] shall have no power over My subjects — unless it be such as are [already] lost in grievous error and follow you [of their own will]” (15:42).**

Rather, Satan has the ability to tempt, allure, entice, seduce, and stir the psychology of man, who ultimately permits such a thing to happen. A committed Muslim who is cemented in the will of Allah (ﷻ) leaves no pliable room for Satan to allure or corrupt him. A Muslim bears a heightened consciousness of Allah that acts as a deterrent to the enticements of Satan. There are, though, people who, as a matter of their own free will, choose to be attracted and provoked by Satan. Gradually, these types are ensnared and captured by Satan. He then prompts them on a course of self-destruction and eternal ruin,

And if it should happen that a prompting from Satan stirs you up [to sin], seek refuge with Allah: behold, He is all-hearing, all-knowing. Verily, those who are conscious of Allah bethink themselves [of Him] whenever any dark suggestion from Satan touches them — whereupon, lo! they begin to see [things] clearly, even though their [godless] brethren would [like to] draw them into error: and then they cannot fail [to do what is right] (7:200–202).

All Satan is capable of doing is to use his power of suggestion and excitation. Satan works the subtle channels present in the human self. On the Day of Judgement, even Satan will confess that he only had the power of influence by exciting false hope and carnal or material desire,

And when everything will have been decided, Satan will say, “Behold, Allah promised you something that was bound to come true! I, too, held out [all manner of] promises to you — but I deceived you. Yet I had no power at all over you: I but called you, and you responded to me. Hence, blame not me, but blame yourselves...” (14:22).

Man comes under the sway of internal thoughts that tell him to do what is right, or internal thoughts that tell him to do what is beguiling and provocative. Such inclinations — in either direction — are the internal channels of what goes into man’s final decision. There are two forces pulling in opposite directions, and it is up to man to make up his mind and do what he alone decides to do,

And every human being will come forward with [his erstwhile] inner urges and [his] conscious mind, [and will be told], “Indeed, unmindful have you been of this [Day of Judgement]; but now We have lifted from you your veil, and sharp is your sight today!” And one part

of him will say, “This it is that has been ever-present with me!” [Whereupon Allah will command], “Cast, cast into Hell every [such] stubborn enemy of the truth, [every] withholder of good [and] sinful aggressor [and] fomenter of distrust [between man and man — everyone] who has set up another deity beside Allah: cast him, then, cast him into suffering severe!” Man’s other self will say, “O our Sustainer! It was not I that led his conscious mind into evil [no], but it had gone far astray [of its own accord]!” [And] He will say, “Contend not before Me, [O you sinners], for I gave you a forewarning [of this Day of Reckoning] (50:21–28).

The clarification here between the angels, the jinn, and Iblīs was necessary for the provision of a better understanding of the early *āyāt* in *Sūrah al-A‘rāf*. Given the plethora of variously unsubstantiated opinions, errant thoughts, and rumors on the matter that often tend to overshadow Qur’anic certitude, this writer tried to sideline all of those obfuscations and let the Qur’an “shine through,” as it were, so that the meanings herein can be elaborated to a clear and unencumbered mind.

### The Origin of Nationalism and Racism

Iblīs in this setting disobeyed Allah (ﷻ). Allah’s words deliver insight into what was going through his mind and what type of creature he truly is. How can anyone bluntly and directly disobey Allah when he knows that Allah is the Creator and the Sustainer? Allah is everything vital and necessary: so how can a thinking being willingly disobey and go against his Maker and Provider?

This primordial setting is inclusive of three attitudes, characters, and natures. One of them obeys in an absolute sense, the second disobeys without “second thoughts,” and the last one — human nature — will appear clearly with its opposing proclivities and propensities as the narrative develops. The first type is unconditionally and infinitely obedient to Allah (ﷻ), its persona and



function being substantiated by the angels' immediate and inerrant response to Allah's commands. As for the other two creations of differing compositions, Allah imparts the following indisputable and ironclad information,

**[And Allah] said, “What has kept you from prostrating yourself when I commanded you [to do so]?” Answered [Iblīs], “I am better than he: You have created me out of fire, whereas him You have created out of clay” (7:12).**

This early scenario encapsulated by the *āyah* captures the condensed emotions and ideas that have been playing themselves out in human history ever since that moment. Allah (ﷻ) orders those in His heavenly presence to bow down to a form of life made out of mud. And everyone obeyed except for Iblīs who worked his own idea into Allah's command. Instead of practically obeying Allah, he selfishly disobeyed Him. And his rationale for his discordant position was nothing other than his personal opinion.

In the event the *āyah* is describing, there is no room for impressions, inclinations, and intellectualizations. Allah's words are crystal clear. However, Iblīs wanted to work into these vivid words his own spin and prejudice. In other words, he gave himself the basis to break away from Allah (ﷻ) by declining to comply with His order. When Allah's words are so clear there can be no excuse for “meanings” or “ideas” that counter His authority and legally binding command. When Allah gives an order there is no room for any of His creatures to “second-guess,” “rethink,” or “override” Him. And an order from Allah is not just any order. It is *the* order. Obedience becomes binding the instant the order is given. Hence implementation of the order is not optional.

Iblīs was not short on information. He knew Allah (ﷻ) to be the Creator, the Provider, the Initiator, and the Sustainer. He knew that nothing happens in life and existence without Allah's permission and agency. Nevertheless, he chose not to follow through on Allah's command and what it entailed from him. Rather, he permanently damned himself by acting in accordance with his own impression of

Allah's words, **“He [Iblīs] said, ‘I am better than he [Adam]: You created me out of fire and You created him out of clay.’”**

Because this statement contains the rationale for all breakaway, divisive, separatist, and self-centered ideas in human socio-political relationships, it deserves a meticulous and comprehensive scrutiny. It represents the cornerstone of nationalism and groundwork for racism, as the social theories and political policies that have ruined the human family ever since Iblīs enunciated his infamous words can be traceable to these fundamentals.

**“I am better than he”** is the stuff of which all social and political ideologies that have split up and disunited the human race are made. Two very potent forces in today's world are at the helm of this attitude and mentality that considers itself superior to the “other”: nationalism and racism. Leading the nationalist and racist charge are peoples who have come out of the Judeo-Christian context. These are the peoples or governments that have, more or less, defined nationalism and racism, and then passed it on to the rest of the world. To get a sense of how Iblīs is alive and well in the human context, it would be instructive to consider how the Iblīsī mindset developed in the context of Euro-American history.

Nationalism is so ubiquitous and varied in its nuances that it has become difficult to provide clear definitions. This may explain the words of Iblīs when he later on says that he will approach the descendants of Adam (ﷺ) from the right and from the left, and from all directions. In its most general usage, nationalism refers to the whole process of “nation-building” in history. A more restricted usage equates it with “national sentiment” or consciousness, a sense of belonging to a particular nation. Nationalism may also be treated as a particular kind of language, symbolism, and mythology appropriate to a certain unit of population. Nationalism may refer to a given type of social and political movement, with recurrent goals. Most commonly, nationalism is regarded as an ideology or doctrine of national loyalty and will.<sup>73</sup>

What follows will mainly be concerned with the ideology, movement, and symbolism of nationalism. Of course, nationalism is much more all-embracing than an ideology. It is a type of culture.

Nevertheless, that culture can be approached most usefully through the ideology, or what can be termed the “core doctrine.” This may be summarized as:

1. the world is divided into nations, each with its own identity and destiny;
2. the nation is the source of all political power;
3. loyalty to the nation overrides all other allegiances;
4. true freedom can only be realized in and through a nation; and
5. global peace and justice can only be secured through free nations.<sup>74</sup>

The core doctrine is the *sine qua non* (without which it could not be) of nationalism everywhere. Yet it provides only the barest of belief-structures. In practice, nationalists must supplement the core doctrine with all kinds of “secondary” and supporting notions and theories, for example, the Romantic idea of Poland as a “suffering Christ” among the nations, soon to rise again, or Zionism’s belief that the Jewish people can only be reborn in their ancient, messianic homeland. In each case, however, nationalism is revealed as an ideology of the nation, not of the state.<sup>75</sup>

The main goals of the nationalist movement — identity, unity, autonomy — flow from this ideology. Nationalists strive to endow their nation with a distinctive culture or “character,” as both Rousseau and Herder proclaimed. Similarly, the unity of the nation, both territorial and social, has always preoccupied nationalists, often leading to strong centralizing policies and sometimes irredentist movements. Finally, every nationalism strives for maximum autonomy — to lead a culturally “authentic” life, to secure some degree of economic *autarchy* (economic independence as a national policy), and in the end to obtain political “home rule” or even sovereign statehood.<sup>76</sup>

With these goals in mind, nationalism can be tentatively defined as an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population, some of whose members deem it to be an actual or potential nation. Therefore, nationalism is an ideology of, and movement for, the nation.

Though nationalists may demand independence in a state of their own, their primary concern is with the cultural-historical community of the nation. There have been many seemingly conflicting ways of defining the concept of the “nation,” some emphasizing its apparently “natural” personality while others its artificial character; some its antiquity but others its modernity; and some its “objective” features while others its purely “subjective” character.<sup>77</sup>

Nevertheless, it is possible to reconstruct the main characteristics of the nationalist concept of the “nation” as an ideal-type stripped of all particular accretions. These include the idea that nations are communities of shared memories and mass culture, that they possess definite historic territories or “homelands” and that they have a high degree of economic unity and shared legal norms, including rights and duties for all members. Thus, again tentatively, the nation can be defined as a named community of shared history and mass culture, with a “homeland” of its own, and possessing a single economy with uniform rights and duties for all members.<sup>78</sup>

It must be stressed that these are merely working definitions. The symbols, language, myths, and rituals of nationalism are what give it the power and intensity that it so often displays. Symbols like the flag, anthem, currency, and passport; concepts like authenticity, self-determination, and the national mission; ceremonies like military parades, remembrance services for the fallen, and celebrations of historic events; and above all, myths of origin, liberation, and a past heroic or “golden age” — these are what endow the belief-structures (and working definitions) of nationalism with their political, cultural, and social content, and hence their popular resonance. In short, as a “religion-surrogate,” nationalism has its own specific dogmas, symbols, altars, and feasts.<sup>79</sup>

Social scientists and political theorists have tried to explain the power and ubiquity of nationalism in the modern world, but their conclusions vary widely based on their own initial suppositions of what they perceive reality to be. Most theories of nationalism are “modernist.” They assume that nations and nationalism are wholly modern phenomena, the products of peculiarly modern conditions. This is the case with the socio-demographic school of

theorists around Karl Deutsch. It charts the rise of nations through the modern processes of social mobilization and cultural assimilation, using indices like urbanization, mass literacy, the mass media and voting patterns.<sup>80</sup>

Elie Kedourie, on the other hand, emphasizes the ideological dimensions of nationalism. He regards it as a “doctrine invented at the beginning of the 19th century,” and links it to the impact of the French Revolution, the philosophy of Kant and his followers, and the exclusion of intellectuals in Germany. Ultimately, however, nationalism was the product of a *zeitgeist*, which saw the breakdown of political habits and viable communities, so creating a restless alienated youth striving for unattainable perfection on earth.<sup>81</sup>

Later, Kedourie extended his analysis to Africa and Asia. Here European imperialism pulverized traditional societies, while European education and scholarship rediscovered native ethnic communities. But colonial bureaucracy, with its discrimination against native intellectuals, was what provoked the alienated discontent that demanded a “millennial” political solution. That solution, an anti-colonial nationalism, derived its power, not just from the Enlightenment, but from a long tradition of Christian millennial strivings in Europe. Like its forebear, a secular nationalism abolished the barriers between the public and private domains, created a new purified elect, and spread frenzied destruction wherever it penetrated. Though he may have overstated its millennial character and underestimated its auto-emancipatory optimism, Kedourie revealed an acute sense of nationalism’s quasi-religious, messianic character, which can evoke such powerful sentiments of collective self-sacrifice.<sup>82</sup>

Yet nationalism can also be a practical project. Indeed, for some, it is the political doctrine of a modern, industrial world. Past “agro-literate” societies had no room for nations and nationalism; but a mobile industrial world requires both. Modernization has eroded traditional societies, replacing their tight structures with a literary, schooled culture. Today the people are all “clerks,” and nationalism is the process by which some oral “low” cultures are turned into literary “high” cultures. This requires a state-supported,

mass, public, standardized education system. Nations and nationalism are functional for a world of industrial cultures.<sup>83</sup>

Yet there are problems. Modernization uproots villagers who flock to overcrowded cities where they compete for scarce resources with city-dwellers. In this competition, culture plays a crucial role. It can discriminate between people of different language, color, and religion, with ensuing ethnic conflict on the one hand, and ethnic secession movements led by their intelligentsia on the other.<sup>84</sup>

In a similar vein, some would seek to account for the worldwide diffusion of nationalism through the “uneven development” of capitalism. The latter is brought to non-Western societies by Western imperialists, and the result is to provoke resistance by indigenous elites. Having no other resources to hand to the ordinary people, they appeal to the masses and “invite them into history,” writing the invitation card in their language and culture. Nationalism is therefore always a popular, interclass movement, a mobilization of the masses in conditions of helplessness.<sup>85</sup>

Critics have not been slow to point to the deterministic, and materialistic, character of these theories. Can the close link between nationalism and economic modernization be upheld? Even if nationalism, the ideological movement, is modern, are nations too the product of capitalism and industrialism? Or would looking to cultural variables for these explanations do better?<sup>86</sup>

In fact, there are those who highlight the place of linguistic education in the genesis of modern mass nationalisms. Some would take this one step further by treating the nation as an “imagined community,” at once limited and sovereign. *Imagining* and *narrating* the nation now becomes the primary locus of explanation. This means investigating the creation of a mass reading public and focusing on the literary devices used in books, journals, and newspapers to create an identification with a sociological community proceeding along an “empty, homogenous time.” That is why writers and intellectuals are so vital for nationalisms.<sup>87</sup>

For some, therefore, nations are the product of modern conditions. They are the result, not just of the decline of old sacred faith communities and dynastic realism, but also of the spread of the

technology of “print-capitalism” in 16th-century Europe and later. Without that technology and its commodities, books and newspapers, nations would be literally inconceivable. Nations are born on the ruins of religious traditions and faiths, yet by their appeal to the sociological imagination and the judgement of posterity they serve the same cravings for community and immortality.<sup>88</sup>

Is it possible for these various “modernist” theories to be sustained? Can nations be regarded as modern communities of industrial culture? A number of scholars have questioned these assumptions. While they cannot accept the views of an earlier generation of scholars, who sought and found nations in antiquity and treated them as primordial, they are equally skeptical of the fashionable myth of the “modern nation.” They make several points:

1. The dating of “nations” is problematic. If the nation is strictly defined as a “mass” phenomenon, then most nations would only emerge with the emancipation of women (and ethnic minorities). While this might apply to the new states of Africa and Asia, how shall the histories of the core communities of the much older European states be treated? Should there not be a distinction between the “old, continuous nations” of certain (western, northern) parts of Europe from the “nations of design” found in much of Eastern Europe, and later in Africa and Asia?
2. Even in the new states, the “core” population may possess a long, continuous history of shared myths, symbols, memories, and traditions. The new state may be built around a relatively durable ethnic community (or *ethnie*), such as the Han Chinese, the Viet, the Burmese, the Persians, the Amhara, the Shona, or the dominant *ethnie* in the states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. How does the emergent “new nation” relate to these ethnic cores?
3. The political imaginings and activities of the intelligentsia or other elites, however important, cannot therefore be treated as the key to grasping the growth of nations and the hold of nationalism. Nations are not simply modern constructs or discourses to be “deconstructed” to reveal powerful elite interests.

On the contrary, preexisting ethnic ties and sentiments limit the ability of elites to manipulate mass emotions and determine which among the many traditions of “ethno-history” will find a mass response.

4. Religious traditions, far from declining, have become revitalized in many areas, including parts of the industrial West; and much of their strength derives from an ethnic content. In many cases, there has been a symbiosis of religion and ethnicity — among Sinhalese, Sikhs, Moros, Persians, Druze, Maronites, Israeli Jews, Monophysite Amhara, Armenians, Azeris, Orthodox Serbs, and Catholic Croats. Many of these ethno-religious symbioses predate the modern era and condition the ways in which subsequent ethnic nationalisms develop.<sup>89</sup>

Nationalism is also linked to pre-modern religious cultures through the secularization of ancient myths of ethnic election. The idea of a “chosen people,” classically formulated in the Bible, was not confined to the Jews, even in antiquity, let alone the medieval world. It is found among some Persians, Byzantine Greeks, Armenians and Ethiopians, as well as Russians, Poles, French, English, Irish, and many other peoples. Such myths involve beliefs in the unique destiny of an ethno-religious community, a sense of collective mission, a veneration for sacred heritage and ancestral traditions, and an equally fervent attachment to the land of those forefathers. These are all elements that nationalism has taken up in secular form, with its emphasis on language, literature, music, the arts, and popular folklore. Today, all peoples have become chosen nations, every nation is an irreplaceable elect. And the old moral and ritual obligations of chosenness have today become the duties of citizenship and the respect for cultural diversity.<sup>90</sup>

Given the many links between modern nations and much older *ethnie*, are there prospects of a world without nations? Can humanity live without nationalism? The late-20th century has undoubtedly witnessed rapid, and remarkable, changes. Vast transnational companies and an international division of labor compete today with traditional nation-states for economic hegemony.



There has also been a dramatic revolution in mass computerized information technology and communications, binding together populations with a speed and immediacy that few could have dreamed possible even two decades ago. Mass travel and communications have also awakened a more general interest in other cultures and intensified links between nations. Trade has increased, while military alliances, supra-national regional associations, and global political institutions such as the United Nations have multiplied, transcending national boundaries.<sup>91</sup>

Yet, despite these “advancements,” there has been little appreciable decline in national sentiments and identities in most parts of the world. If anything, ethnic nationalisms have proliferated, and the powers of nation-states have increased, even in democratic Western societies. The computer revolution has served to facilitate the renaissance of ethnic and linguistic nationalisms, and economic inequalities have exacerbated ethnic antagonisms handed down from earlier epochs.<sup>92</sup>

Similar paradoxes attend recent attempts to forge a united Europe. On the one hand, there has been a rapid growth of economic integration and a more halting movement to political unity. Elite attitudes to “Europe,” though they vary from nation to nation, with Italy, Germany, Spain, and the Benelux countries evincing more favorable sentiments than Britain or France, have become much more positive. Yet no massive shift of popular identification from individual nations to the European Union has as yet been observed. At most, what may be considered mildly directional is the gradual evolution of a sense of European cultural kinship, based on a “family of cultures” composed of overlapping legal, political, and cultural traditions. Such a many-stranded identity must seem to be vague and nebulous compared with the vivid, accessible, and deep-rooted attachments of the several national identities in Europe. Given the quite different levels of economic and political development within Europe, the many intractable ethnic problems, and the continual jockeying for leadership in the Union, not to mention the problems of delimiting “Europe,” it would be premature to predict the imminent emergence, or creation, of a European

identity, however conceived. And with the recent potential, though as yet not realized, British exit (Brexit), the latter fears may be closer to realization than not.<sup>93</sup>

There is a more profound reason for doubting the ability of any European project to transcend nationalism. Communities and identities require popular myths, symbols, and memories; but in these respects “Europe” (like other regional associations) is singularly lacking. It can boast no generally acceptable collective shrines, heroes, and martyrs. The medieval Christian civilization of a Charlemagne or Otto is remote and at best irrelevant to modern, secular and democratic, European ideals; and heroes like Napoleon (or even Rembrandt or Beethoven) remain primarily national in their contexts and connotations. In the absence of a popular European mythology, ritual, and symbolism, who will “die for Europe,” as so many laid down their lives for “king and country” in two world wars? And if they did, would not a new, perhaps more exclusive and dangerous, “Euro-nationalism” emerge?<sup>94</sup>

The near-universal appeal of nationalism, suggested by this example, lies in its ability to overcome the scene of oblivion that death without the hope of another world presents to mortals. By being joined to a national “community of history and destiny,” the individual becomes a link in the chain of generations stretching from distant ancestors to an unknown posterity. This overriding need is complemented by the persistence of ethnic ties and the uneven incidence of “ethno-history” among culturally diverse populations, the conflicting interests of national states in an inter-state system, and radically divergent levels of global economic development. Hence the likelihood of any early “unionization” of nations and nationalism would appear remote.<sup>95</sup>

On the flip side of the coin, out of Iblis’ words, “**I am better than he: You created me out of fire and You created him out of clay,**” comes the prejudicial attitude of racism. Racism depends upon the concept of race although the two are different. The existence of racism does not presuppose the truth of race as an explanatory category, but it does presuppose its existence as a concept. A *race* denotes a group of people who are alleged to possess common

physical characteristics of genetic origin. It is generally agreed that it is a misleading concept with no scientific basis. However, racism as a doctrine of superiority and inferiority is built upon the idea of race. To undermine the idea of race at an intellectual level does not necessarily affect the reality of racism in practice.

Though racism in the history of the West may not be a chapter that is taught at universities and colleges as an integral part of the ancient world, the Muslims can trace racism all the way back to Iblis and his superiority complex toward Adam (ﷺ). Notions of “barbarians” were common features of the pre-modern, xenophobic nations of the ancient world. In the Euro-Middle Ages, peasants were seen as inferior, the descendants of Ham, a theme based on a biblical text later to be used against black people. The word *race* may have first been used in English in 1508 in a poem by William Dunbar, and may have first been used as a biological concept by the French physician Francois Bernier in 1684. Carolus Linnaeus in 1735 argued for the existence of four races. Racial theory was expounded by the French anatomist Cuvier in the 19th century and was further developed by Arthur de Gobineau and others, though racial superiority was assumed by such writers as David Hume, John Locke, and Charles Kingsley. After the appearance of Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* (1859), the ideas of racial contamination and degeneration were popularized through the “science” of eugenics developed by Francis Galton.<sup>96</sup>

In our own time the movement of socio-biology represents a fusion of evolutionary theory and modern population genetics; while it is not intrinsically racist, it is often used to support racist positions. In general, however, theories of race and of racial superiority based on genetics are discredited today. There are no such realities as pure races, and this has led some writers to question the popular phrase “race relations” as being based on a conceptual error.<sup>97</sup>

Coined in the 1930s, the English word *racism* did not appear in most dictionaries until the 1960s. *Webster’s International Dictionary* included it for the first time in 1961, though *Barnhart’s Dictionary of New English Since 1963* (1973) failed to do so. Both *racism* and *racialism* are missing from the *Oxford English Dictionary* of 1933. The term

was first suggested by Ruth Benedict in her book *Race and Racism* (London, 1942), which defined racism as “the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group is destined to congenital superiority.” In this context racism was seen as referring to those sets of ideas that defined ethnic and racial groups on the basis of claims about biological nature and inherent superiority or ability. Some observers saw racism as “the new Calvinism.” In the early-1960s the term was often used to describe organized political groups (“racist organizations”).<sup>98</sup>

However, two changes have occurred since the late-1960s: a shift toward a structural concept of racism as embodied in institutions; and an approach that stresses cultural difference rather than superiority. This is sometimes called “the new racism.” The idea of institutional racism owed much to Stokely Carmichael (later Kwame Ture) and C.V. Hamilton and their notion of Black Power (1968). While it is still common to understand racism as a doctrine of inherent superiority, and therefore to deny its existence where such a doctrine is absent, crude biological notions of superiority are less common today, although they have not disappeared. Far more common are cultural ideas stressing the unity of the nation and defining national identity in a racialized way. Such racism is rooted in the memory of a mythical, imaginary past, a golden age of pure whiteness. The notion of purity is central to racism and is very destructive.<sup>99</sup>

Accounts of racism tend to emphasize particular aspects and ignore others. Many see racism in terms of psychological models and so are inclined to take racism out of history. Others lay emphasis on racism as ignorance, and hence emphasize education, ignoring the behavioral aspect that works through culture. Emphasis on education can also ignore the issues of power and economics central to racist practices. Some would approach racism by way of the concepts of pluralism and diversity. Roy Jenkins, when British home secretary in 1966, defined racial integration as not the flattening process of assimilation but equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. The purely economic approach tends to see racism as arising from competition in the labor

market or in housing; hence, on this view, more resources, such as jobs and homes, should lead to less racism.<sup>100</sup>

A reasonable working definition of racism is that it is an ideology and/or structure of actions in the public sphere, implicitly or explicitly based on a concept of racial difference as a policy category, which results in both disadvantage and discrimination for certain racially defined groups. Such a definition differentiates racism, which operates at the economic and political levels, from *racial prejudice*, which operates at the cultural and psychological levels. Thus discrimination in resource allocation is not simply due to the presence of prejudiced individuals but is part of a system. Racism is a feature of organizational structures. Such racism was firmly in place in Britain, for example, by the early-1950s.<sup>101</sup>

Modern racism is inextricably bound up with the history of imperialism, a system of global domination with its accompanying cultural support structures. The main ethnic minorities in Britain come from a colonial background, those from the Caribbean from a colonial and slave background. In Britain since the late-1950s race relations have been linked with immigration control, and successive governments have argued that good race relations depend on tight controls.<sup>102</sup>

While racism is more than racial prejudice, the extent of prejudice within a population is clearly connected with racism in its structures. The assessment of prejudice is notoriously difficult. A survey in 1984 by the Central Statistical Office, London, showed that nine out of ten people believed that Britain was a racially prejudiced society, and about 50% believed that prejudice had worsened in recent years. However, high levels of prejudice in a population where the general tendency is toward equality may be less significant than low levels in a more ambivalent society.<sup>103</sup>

Race is certainly linked to class but the links are complex. Much middle-class opposition to racism is of a liberal kind and avoids the realities of life in working-class communities. However, the refusal to accept the reality of working-class racism ignores the conclusions of much research. There is evidence that racial prejudice is strongest among unskilled manual workers. The

election of fascist candidates in working class districts of Europe suggests that racism is a significant force in some areas.<sup>104</sup>

Responses to racism vary according to the significance given to it. For some, attention to race as such evades more underlying issues and reinforces racial stereotypes. They would therefore argue for racial inexplicitness, focusing on economic deprivation and so on. This approach was encouraged in a book by the American sociologist William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race* (1978), and it has been a feature of much British urban social policy. Wilson argued for the crucial importance of the urban economy and of the place of poor African Americans within that economy. He urged attention to employment and social policy rather than to race as such.<sup>105</sup>

For some, racism is a minority belief and attitude within a largely tolerant society. Such a view tends to lead to an optimistic approach, emphasizing basic values of tolerance, goodwill, and democracy. Exponents of such an approach to racism might place emphasis on positive images and on the need to oppose stereotypes. They might emphasize psychological dimensions, sense of rejection, insecurity, poor self-image, the authoritarian personality, etc.<sup>106</sup>

However, evidence suggests that racism is more deeply rooted and intertwined with the history and structures of society so that to disturb one element is to disturb the entire structure. This belief in structural racism has led to the creation of organizations to combat racism within structures. In Britain the Commission for Racial Equality, set up to implement the Race Relations Act, has developed codes of practice for employment and housing. While no British government has used the Act as a charter for racial justice, since 1981 there has been an increase in anti-racist strategies, promoted in the UK particularly by the Greater London Council. Such strategies include affirmative action and contract compliance. However, anti-racism has been criticized for encouraging the isolation of racism as a discrete and self-contained political formation, and some claim that it has exhausted its usefulness. There has been much criticism of bureaucratic anti-racism and managerial radicalism. It has been claimed by some that many anti-racists are mirror

images of racists, with authoritarian attitudes and susceptibility to conspiracy theories.<sup>107</sup>

In the secular West, the relationship of religion to race is complex. In the Hebrew biblical tradition, according to some, there is no concept of, and no word for, race in the modern sense. Yet Christianity has played a central role in the growth, first, of anti-Judaism, which developed into what is called anti-Semitic ideology, and second, of anti-black racism within the context of colonial slavery. It is equally clear that the Christian gospel has provided resources for resistance to racism. Racism has been described as a litmus test of a barium meal, which reveals other disorders and injustices within the body politic. It therefore provides a vital area of self-scrutiny and self-criticism for religious communities and traditions.<sup>108</sup>

The study of race and racism is a rapidly growing field in the social sciences. Over the past several decades there has been a burgeoning of studies of race and ethnic differences and their social meaning in various historical, social, political, and economic contexts. Theoretical and political debates have raged during this time, and have sometimes led to bitter conceptual and political arguments. At the same time the analysis of race and racism has become an established field of study in a number of social science disciplines, most notably in sociology, political science, economics, anthropology, cultural studies, and geography. The literature emanating from all these disciplines has multiplied over the years, particularly in the United States, Britain and other European societies, and South Africa.<sup>109</sup>

There seem to be two major reasons for this growing interest in the study of race and racism. First, and most importantly, there has been an evident preoccupation with racial issues in a variety of societies, including the United States, South Africa, and a number of societies in Western Europe. Studies have shown that racial inequalities and injustices continue to exist at a number of levels, ranging from the economic, social, and political to the cultural. Second, associated with this awareness of the persistence of racial inequalities there has been a realization that racism continues to be a vital, and some would say growing, force in contemporary societies.<sup>110</sup>

Whatever the explanation for the recent unfolding of interest in the study of race and racism, it is clear that current debates have led to the emergence of a variety of schools of thought. There is by no means agreement about the definition of the key concepts of race and racism, nor about their relevance for social analysis. Some scholars argue that the concept of race has no relevance for social analysis, while others have questioned whether racism exists as a unified category or is composed of a variety of political and social discourses and practices. Given these theoretical differences it is useful to explore diverse explanations of racial and ethnic phenomena in the contemporary political environment and their implications for socio-political change.<sup>111</sup>

The study of race as a field of social-scientific inquiry and research can be seen as originating in the work of a number of American social theorists, including Robert E. Park, Charles S. Johnson, and E. Franklin Frazier. From a different perspective the work of African-American writers, most notably W.E.B. Du Bois, helped to establish the centrality of race to the analysis of US society. During the period from the 1920s to the 1950s the works of this group of writers helped to establish what came to be defined as the study of race relations, particularly through their studies of segregation, immigration, and race consciousness in the United States. During the interwar period the works of these authors helped to develop a body of sociological concepts that was later to be refined into the sociology of race relations.<sup>112</sup>

Early sociological theorizing on race in the United States saw race as a relevant social category only to the extent to which cultural and social meanings were attached to the physical traits of a particular social group. This in turn helped to popularize notions about the origins of racial conflicts and prejudice that concentrated on situations of cultural contact. Emphasis in sociological studies of the race problem during these decades was on the origins of race prejudice, the interplay between prejudice and conflict, the impact of assimilation, especially during the period of slavery, on the life of African Americans, and the processes by which racial conflicts could be mediated or overcome.<sup>113</sup>



These early studies of race did not actually talk about racism as such. This is a more recent concept and its usage was linked to the rise of Nazism in Germany. As the Nazis came to power, articulating and putting into practice their ideas about a racial superiority, the term racism came to be used to refer to ideas that defined some racial or ethnic groups as superior and others as inferior. In the post-1945 period a number of developments outside the United States encouraged interest in the study of race and racism in other societies. An important development in this context was the emergence of migrant labor as an important social group in many Western European societies. Migration from the ex-colonies and southern Europe led to the creation of racial and ethnic minorities in countries such as Britain, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Another important development was the entrenchment of the apartheid system in South Africa, a process that aroused the interest of both social scientists and political activists, particularly in relation to the role of the political and legal systems in enforcing racial segregation and the “separate development” of different racial groups.<sup>114</sup>

In Britain and other European societies, the growth in the theorization of race and racism ran parallel to these developments. This work has provided a number of important and sophisticated analyses of the politics and ideology of racism. There were two central concerns in these early European attempts to theorize racial and ethnic relations: first, the patterns of immigration and incorporation in the labor market of black and other ethnic communities; and second, the role of colonial history in determining popular conceptions of color, race, and ethnicity in European societies. Most studies of this period concentrated on the interaction between minority and majority communities in employment, housing, and other social contexts.<sup>115</sup>

Although many of these studies were influenced by early American theories, they also included theoretical works of some significance. Michael Banton's book *Race Relations* (London, 1967) represents a good example of texts from this period. It looked at race relations from a global and historical perspective, concentrating

particularly on situations of cultural contact, beliefs about the nature of race, and the social relations constructed on the basis of racial categories. By looking at the experience of changing patterns of interaction historically, Banton argued that six basic orders of race relations could be delineated: institutionalized contact, acculturation, domination, paternalism, integration, and pluralism.<sup>116</sup>

An important focus of research in recent years has been on the role of political institutions in shaping the position of racial minorities in particular societies. As William Julius Wilson has pointed out, political and legal frameworks are an important element in contemporary situations governed by racial domination and inequality. This theme has been developed over the past few decades in the works of political sociologists who have looked at a variety of race relations situations, ranging from South Africa to Britain and the United States. This concern with relations of power and privilege has influenced the study of race and racism in a fundamental way. A clear example of this trend is John Rex's *Race Relations in Sociological Theory* (1983), which attempts to provide a broad theoretical framework for the study of race relations. According to Rex's analytic model, the definition of social relations between persons as race relations is encouraged by the existence of certain structural conditions, for example, frontier situations of conflict over scarce resources; the existence of unfree, indentured, or slave labor; unusually harsh class exploitation; strict legal intergroup distinctions and occupational segregation; differential access to power and prestige; cultural diversity and limited group interaction; and migrant labor as an underclass fulfilling stigmatized roles in a metropolitan setting. From this perspective the study of race relations is concerned with situations in which such structured conditions interact with actors' definitions in such a way as to produce a racially structured social reality.<sup>117</sup>

The other main conceptual framework that has influenced the study of race and racism in recent times is Marxism. Early Marxist work on racial and ethnic divisions concentrated particularly on race and class as modes of exploitation. Oliver Cox's *Caste, Class and Race* (1948) is an early example of this focus. Cox

was primarily interested in the economic interests that produce racist exploitation and ideologies historically, and explained racial inequality as an outcome of the interest of the capitalist class in super-exploiting sections of the working class. Because he saw class divisions as the fundamental source of exploitation in society, the main thrust of his work was to conceptualize racial exploitation as a special form of class exploitation. This model was subsequently to exercise a deep influence on the work of Marxist writers on race in the United States and, to a more limited extent, in European and other societies.<sup>118</sup>

The majority of recent Marxist studies, however, are critical both of the work of Cox and of classical Marxism. It has been pointed out, for example, that although the works of Marx and Engels contain a number of scattered references to the pertinence of racial and ethnic relations in certain social formations (for example, the reference to race as an economic factor in the slavery of the United States), they contain little historical or theoretical reflection on the role of such processes in the capitalist mode of production as a whole. Perhaps even more damaging, a number of critics have argued that several statements on race by Marx and Engels reveal traces of the dominant racial stereotypes of their time and an uncritical usage of common racist imagery. Additionally, a number of critics of Marxism have argued that the reliance by Marxists on the concept of class has precluded them from analyzing racial and ethnic phenomena in their own right, short of subsuming them under wider social relations or treating them as a kind of super-structural phenomenon.<sup>119</sup>

Some recent studies in the United States and Britain have focused more specifically on the role of the state as a site for the reproduction of racially structured situations. Drawing partly on recent Marxist debates on the nature of the capitalist state, a number of studies have analyzed the interplay between politics and racism in specific historical settings. Studies of the role of state institutions in maintaining racialized structures in a number of societies, particularly the United States and South Africa, have highlighted the importance of the political context of racism. This

has raised important questions and problems such as what the precise role of the state is in the reproduction of racially structured social relations; and how far the state can be transformed into an instrument of anti-racist political actions.<sup>120</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the claim that racism is a source of division within the working class was central to the work of early Marxist writers such as Cox. This theme has once again become central to contemporary debates about racism and class formation. In their study of immigrant workers in the class structure of Western Europe, Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack (*Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*, 1973) deal with the way in which the state has intervened to create two distinct strata within the working class through the system of contract labor, which denies political rights to the essentially foreign lower stratum. This lower stratum is said to perform the function of a reserve army of labor.<sup>121</sup>

In Britain, the work of Robert Miles represents one of the most fully developed Marxist analyses of racism as a social and historical phenomenon. His writings reflect a deep concern with overcoming the potentially divisive impact of racism on class organization and radical political action. His analysis was first articulated in *Racism and Migrant Labor* (1982), which is perhaps the most sustained attempt to include the study of racism within the mainstream of Marxist social theory. His empirical research has focused specifically on the situation in Britain and in the rest of Western Europe, and has looked at the role of political, class, and ideological relationships in shaping people's understandings of racial conflict and change in these societies.<sup>122</sup>

A final aspect of recent debates about the pertinence of Marxism to the analysis of race and racism is the question of whether there is an intrinsic Eurocentric bias in the core of Marxist theory. This theme has been taken up in recent years by a number of critics of Marxism and by others who profess to be sympathetic to the Marxist tradition. Perhaps the most important statement of this position is Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism* (1983), which argues forcefully that Marxism is inextricably tied to Western European

philosophical traditions that cannot easily incorporate the experience of racism and ethnic divisions.<sup>123</sup>

What seems clear is that the Marxist discussion of race and racism is searching for a new agenda for the analysis of the dynamics of racial categorization, and there are some encouraging signs of development and renewal. Important contributions are being made to this debate from a number of countries, and these are helping to fashion new perspectives on the role of the state in maintaining racial domination. Good examples of such research are the numerous studies of the South African state and its part in institutionalizing the apartheid system since 1948. These studies have shown that state and legal institutions played an integral role in the establishment and maintenance of apartheid. They have also suggested that the state must be included as a key actor in the study of racism in different national and political contexts.<sup>124</sup>

Concern with the state and politics has been evident in studies of the United States and Europe as well. A key concern of a number of recent US studies has been the interrelationship between relations of politics, power, and racism. As some argue, one of the most salient features of racial relations in contemporary societies is the role of political and legal relations in defining the existence of racial categories and defining the social meanings of notions such as racial inequality, racism, and ethnicity. This theme has been taken up in recent years in studies of the situation of black and other ethnic minorities in Europe. Such studies have looked particularly at the processes by which minority communities and migrant workers are often excluded from equal access to political institutions and are denied basic social and economic rights. It is interesting to note in this context that in countries such as Germany and France a key point in recent political conflicts has been the question of whether migrant workers should be given greater political rights.<sup>125</sup>

The position of black minorities in Britain represents something of a special case in this regard, and a key concern of a number of recent studies of the politics of race in Britain has been to develop a conception of racialization as a process that has

specific effects on politics and ideology. Aspects of this process include the impact of racist ideologies and nationalist discourses, anti-racist discourses, and the influence of black political action on political institutions and forms of political mobilization. It is within this context that the concepts of racial categorization and racialization have been used to refer to what Robert Miles in *Racism* calls “those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities.” A number of writers have attempted to use these concepts to analyze the processes by which race has been socially and politically constructed in specific historical, political, and institutional contexts.<sup>126</sup>

Good examples of such studies include attempts to critically analyze the role of race relations legislation, the emergence of black minority representation in political institutions, and the development of public policies dealing with specific aspects of racial inequality in areas such as employment and housing. The premise of such studies is that the processes by which race is given particular meanings are variable across and within national boundaries and are shaped by political, legal, and socio-economic environments. Comparative studies of immigration policies in Europe have shown, for example, that the construction of legislation to control the arrival of specific groups of migrants was often the subject of intense political and ideological controversy.<sup>127</sup>

The changing form of racial ideologies in advanced industrial societies is perhaps best illustrated by recent debates about the role of racial imagery and symbols in the mass media, literature, art, and other cultural forms. A growing body of work has been produced on the use of race as a symbol in various areas of cultural expression and experience. Reacting against what they see as the lack of an account of cultural forms of racial discourse, a number of writers have sought to develop a more rounded picture of contemporary racial imagery by looking at the role of literature, the popular media, and other cultural forms in representing changing images of race and ethnicity. As David Goldberg has pointed out (*Anatomy of Racism*, 1990), “the

presumption of a single monolithic racism is being displaced by a mapping of the multifarious historical formulations of racisms.”<sup>128</sup>

This has led to growing interest in how racist ideologies developed in the various forms that such ideologies have taken at different states of development. Although this issue had not received much scholarly attention in the past, the renewed interest in the analysis of culture and discourse has helped to overcome this neglect, and the historical, cultural, literary, and philosophical roots of ideologies of race are coming under scrutiny. Specifically, questions are being asked about the role that ideological relations can play in providing a basis for the articulation of racist discourses and practices.<sup>129</sup>

The role of the press and other popular media in shaping social images about racial and ethnic minorities has been a particular focus. A number of detailed studies have examined how press coverage of racial questions can help to construct images of racial minorities as outsiders and as a threat to social cohesion. Another focus has been the role of race and ethnicity as symbols in a variety of cultural forms, including literature and the cinema. This had been a neglected area of research, but in recent years this has been remedied by the publication of a number of important studies of race, culture, and identity. Originating largely from the United States, such studies have looked at a number of areas, including literature, the cinema, and other popular cultural forms, such as television and radio, along with advertising. They have sought to show that within contemporary societies our understandings of race, and the articulation of racist ideologies, cannot be reduced to economic, political, or class relations. This line of argument is exemplified by Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s *The Signifying Monkey* (1988), which attempts to outline a framework for the analysis of images of race within the context of literature in the United States.<sup>130</sup>

Apart from studies of contemporary trends, there has also been a growing interest in historical research on the origins of ideas about race and in the dynamics of race, class, and gender during the colonial period. This has been reflected in important and valuable accounts of the changing usage of racial symbols during the past few

centuries and in accounts of the experiences of colonialism and their impact on our understandings of race and culture. The work of Gayatri Spivak, *In Other Worlds* (1987), has helped to highlight, for example, the complex processes of racial and gender identification experienced by the colonized during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Other studies have sought to show that the oppressed themselves have produced their own discourses about race and identity in the context of their own experiences of domination and exclusion.<sup>131</sup>

In the context of the current political environment it is likely that questions about racism will remain an important component of the political agenda in many societies. It is therefore important to analyze the changing discourses and practices about race in contemporary societies rather than assume that they can be subsumed under a historical and unchanging category of racism. Developments in the United States, Europe, and South Africa where racism is still fierce and intense point to the need to see racial ideologies as inherently unstable and as liable to transformation and change. Indeed, in the contemporary European environment the transformations in Eastern and Central Europe have introduced a new dimension to debates about race and ethnicity, and one which existing accounts of the Western European situation seem to be singularly incapable of dealing with.

The analytical models outlined above also point to the need to broaden existing research priorities to include a multi-dimensional view of racial discourses. Such a view will need to include perspectives about economic, social, political, cultural, and legal expressions of ideas about race and ethnicity. Indications are that recent theoretical contributions in this field have looked more seriously at the cultural dimension and have helped shed new light on contemporary racism, and these have received little attention. But recent political trends worldwide point to the urgency to develop more adequate conceptualizations of the workings of racism as sets of ideas and as practices that can be overcome if adequately challenged.

In the last 100 years mankind has been witness to at least four brutal and bloody applications of **“I am better than he: You**



created me out of fire and You created him out of muck” at a systemic and institutional level. Topping the list in their exaggerated diabolic and destructive nature are the political systems of apartheid, fascism, Nazism, and Zionism. A brief discussion on the evil and self-rationalization of fascism will give the reader a good impression of the others.

The term *fascism* was first used to identify the ruling political system in Italy from 1922–1945 under the leadership of Benito Mussolini. It now also refers to a prototype of totalitarianism and is applied to variations of political systems thought to parallel the Italian model. The term derives from the Italian *fascio*, a perfectly ordinary word meaning *bundle*, *weight*, *group* or *grouping*, with no sinister connotations. When used in a political context, the English equivalent would be *league*, *alliance*, or *union*; in German, it might be *Bund*, and in Arabic it would be *‘uṣbah*, *kutlaḥ*, or *ḥilf*.

Contemporaries found fascism difficult to define. Scholars have not fared better: too often they have agreed to use the term without agreeing on what it means. Depending on their viewpoint, scholars have traced fascism’s origins to such varied sources as Plato’s *Republic*, Romantic radicals like Rousseau, and conservative philosophers who idealized a strong state like Fichte, Carlyle, Hegel, and Nietzsche. Other scholars have identified proto-fascist regimes ranging from the French Revolutionary Terror to Napoleon III’s Second Empire.<sup>132</sup>

These precedents are useful to indicate that fascism was a unique blend of earlier ideologies and institutions. Nevertheless, fascism was essentially a creature of World War I, a response to the revolutionary changes this conflict brought to European politics, culture, and society. The term came into use at that time, and the two decades between WWI and WWII have often been described as the “era of fascism.” With the defeat of the fascist regimes in WWII, fascism has apparently disappeared as a major political phenomenon, a threat to the international order. Yet, given the right crisis, fascism, or at least fascist-style regimes, could once again emerge. Some have commented that with the recent election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, the corporate control of

the White House and its cabinet positions, filled with an assortment of billionaires and multi-millionaires, is a form of neo-fascism.<sup>133</sup>

Fascism has been difficult to define in part because its ideology varied so widely. It was often easier to understand what fascism was against than what it stood for. Fatherland, flag and country, old-fashioned patriotism against the threats of internationalism, and the Bolshevik menace constituted the core of fascism's appeal. This fanatic "blood-and-soil" nationalism was often transmuted into racism, ranging from a generic ethnic pride to a violent, biological racism and ethnicism, as in Nazi Germany. Fascist ideology also included a romantic, anti-rational allure, an appeal to the emotions, and to a quasi-religious longing for a mystic union of peoples and their prophetic leader. In reaction to the utilitarian liberal state, fascism revived aspirations toward the normative or "ethical state." According to this view, the community existed not simply as a practical convenience but in order to fulfill the individual's ethical and moral potential. How people perceived these themes depended on the eye of the beholder. Conservatives viewed fascism as a bulwark against Bolshevism or as a middle way between a worn-out liberal capitalism and the communist horror. Radicals viewed fascism as a genuinely revolutionary ideology that would sweep away discredited ideals and institutions and replace them with a new, disciplined, cohesive society.<sup>134</sup>

If fascism is difficult to define as an ideal, it is not easier to delimit in practice. In defining fascism, it is useful to recall the movement's genesis. It originated in Italy after the end of WWI and scored its first big success with Mussolini's "March on Rome" in 1922. In Italy, fascism was primarily a response to the crisis of the liberal state's political institutions. The Italian prototype spawned wide variations. Every major European country developed at least a fascist party or movement. Jose Antonio Primo de River's Falangists in Spain, Corneliu Codreanu's Legion of the Archangel Michael in Romania, Action Francaise and the Croix de Feu in France, Leon Degrelle's Rexists in Belgium, Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists in England, and Ferencz Szalasi's Arrow Cross movement in Hungary, all claimed to find inspiration in fascism. They drew on

the Italian model, or, as in Eastern Europe, on the Nazis, or a combination of both. Movements or parties, however, did not always blossom into full-blown regimes. In some cases, as in Romania and Hungary, fascism came to power only under the aegis of the WWII Nazi occupation.<sup>135</sup>

Looming as the dominant model after 1933 was the example of Nazi Germany. But the extreme violence, brutality, and racism of the Nazi regime set it apart, and scholars today are still uncertain whether to include the Nazi example under the general rubric of fascism. How little the fascist regimes had in common became evident when Italy and Germany attempted to create a bloc of fascist powers with the Axis (1936) and then contracted a formal alliance with the Pact of Steel (1939). The union proved to be notoriously awkward and quickly foundered during WWII. Thus, rather than a generic “fascism,” it would be more accurate to speak of “fascist-style regimes.”<sup>136</sup>

Nevertheless, within wide national variations, fascist states had certain characteristics and aspirations in common. In their political systems, they created police states, one-party systems led by a charismatic dictator. Their economic systems aimed to develop some form of national socialism. The government was to play an active role in controlling the economy, but unlike Marxian socialism, the state was not to take over the means of production. Fascist socialism was directed at the interests of the nation, not a particular class. Fascism also aspired to some form of the corporatist (or corporatist) state. The antagonism between labor and capital, fostered under the liberal state, was to be bridged in the form of corporations. Through these guild-like structures, labor and capital were to find common ground in developing their particular economic sector. Economic interest would submerge or supersede class interest. In foreign policy, fascist regimes were unabashedly expansionist and imperialist. Mussolini revived Italy’s vision of African colonial empire. Hitler’s Third Reich aspired to a great Volkisch empire in Poland, Russia, and the Ukraine. Hungarian fascists dreamed of dominating the Danube basin; Spanish Falangists coveted African possessions and perhaps even hoped to re-annex Portugal.<sup>137</sup>

Given its many forms in ideology and practice, interpretations of fascism have also varied widely. Historically, four major interpretations can be distinguished: fascism as the crisis of the liberal state, as totalitarianism, as the radical right, and as a revolt against modernity. In the 1920s and 1930s, many contemporaries quite naturally viewed fascism as a crisis of the old liberal system. Liberal political values and institutions had failed. In their place, fascism surfaced: a series of brutal, barbaric, violent dictatorships, led by charismatic tyrants, bereft of ideas or plans for the future. Communists, in particular, viewed fascism as a last, desperate authoritarian phase of capitalism. But such interpretations ignored the genuine mass appeal of fascism and minimized the fascist vision, no matter how confused, of a disciplined, cohesive society.<sup>138</sup>

A second major interpretation, popular during the Cold War, saw fascism as totalitarianism. Proponents of this view were deeply influenced by the apparent indistinguishability of fascism, in its last stages, from communism. The Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, combined with the disclosures of Stalin's purges and mass murders and postwar revelations of the Holocaust, suggested that fascists and communists were cut from the same cloth. A cornerstone of this interpretation is the importance of terror and the repressive apparatus of the modern state. Certainly fascism was a prototype of the modern totalitarian state: in the words of Mussolini, "Everything within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state." Fascism aspired to total control over its citizens, leaving them with no island of privacy. With the aid of 20th-century mass media, fascist states could reach and control the citizenry in a way that earlier regimes could not. Yet there were wide variations in the repressive powers, and the totalitarian reach of fascist or fascist-style regimes. The control of a Mussolini or a Franco was never comparable to that of Hitler or Stalin.<sup>139</sup>

The equating of fascism and communism also minimizes the ideological differences and the social and institutional bases of fascist and communist regimes. In its crudeness and violence, fascist ideology cannot be easily compared to the sophistication of Marxism. Nor were the social and institutional bases of fascist and communist

societies comparable. Fascist regimes protected middle class interests and preserved and compromised with traditional institutions like the church and the military far more than the communists did. Mussolini signed the Lateran Pacts and protected Italian big business. Stalin repressed the church and murdered kulaks.<sup>140</sup>

In the 1960s, a third major interpretation of fascism as a radicalism of the right, as traditional conservative ideas pushed to an extreme, emerged. Fascism as totalitarianism emphasized the novelty of fascism; fascism as a radicalism of the right emphasized its continuities with the past. Such an interpretation, however, lays too much stress on political ideology. Moreover, such a view, with its accent on the conservative or reactionary aspects of fascism, ignores the genuinely revolutionary and innovative goals to which fascists often aspired.<sup>141</sup>

With a lessening of the Cold War and increasing stability in international relations, fascism has been viewed as a revolt against modernity, a protest against the pace of social and cultural change wrought by rapid industrialization. Such an interpretation focuses less on political systems than on paths to social development. In this view, fascism appears as one of several possible routes, together with liberal capitalism and socialism, to modern society. Fascist regimes mobilized and disciplined societies to transform themselves far more rapidly than would have been the case under a *laissez-faire* system. Under fascism, however, direction came from above in such a way as to avoid upsetting the social structure.<sup>142</sup>

In perspective, however, the transformation under fascist regimes appears to have been ambivalent and often superficial. Fascist regimes froze or retarded development more than they sped it up. Italy's transformation into the West's fourth major industrial power occurred during the postwar decades after the fall of fascism. Germany was already a modern, industrialized society when the Nazis came to power, and some scholars have argued that Nazism was in fact a reaction to modernization, a desire to return to a simpler pre-industrial past.<sup>143</sup>

WWII totally discredited fascism as an ideology with mass appeal. Today, the term applies to anything from right-wing terrorist

groups in Italy to Third-World military dictatorships, from ordinary police to motorcycle gangs. Most commonly, the term is used as a label for Third-World military dictatorships ranging from the latest juntas in Africa or Latin America. Following the events of 1989 and the end of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, fascist-style movements and popular outbursts have surfaced in these regions. Observers have commented that if democratic regimes do not develop there, fascist-style regimes might arise. They would feed on the conflicting nationalisms in the area, and they might be spearheaded by the military. Even if such regimes were to emerge, however, it appears unlikely that they would pose a threat to the international order in the way that the fascism of the interwar period, led by Nazi Germany, precipitated the crisis of WWII.<sup>144</sup>

Thus fascism is probably more dormant than dead. Old-style fascism of the interwar period is unlikely to reemerge. Nevertheless, the fascist ideology appeals to the deepest longings for communal dogmatism, for societal monomania, for ethnic safety against a perceived uncongenial “other” in the context of a seething world. Scenarios that might bring forth fascist-style regimes in Europe or the United States are not difficult to imagine. What if the tide of immigrant workers and refugees from the southern hemisphere appeared to overwhelm Europe or the United States? What if the AIDS epidemic continues to spread uncontrollably? What if a stock market crash sets off a worldwide economic panic? Any such prolonged crisis might condition people to respond to fascist-style appeals: ultranationalism, ethnic revolutionary fervor, anti-rationalism, a mystic attachment to a strong leader. Future fascisms, like the earlier ones, would vary with local political traditions and circumstances. With the development of mass media and computers such future fascist regimes would have new totalitarian capacities. In recent years, with the election of the Trump regime in Washington, and the reemergence of far-right (fascist) anti-immigration parties in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Denmark, and France, in some cases having enough broad-based public support to eventually elevate one of their leaders into the prime minister position, the return of institutional fascism is already here.<sup>145</sup>

### The Language of Man Fighting Man Is Attributable to Iblīs

Pity a humanity that cannot trace this problem of racism, ethnicism, and self-centeredness to its source. Those who have dedicated the effort to deeply delve into Qur'anic meanings know the culprit — Iblīs, the accursed — has been around from time immemorial, **“He said, ‘I am superior to him; You have created me out of fire and You created him out of slime.’”** All the ideas and ideologies of race and ethnic pride were pronounced first by Iblīs. From that time on, humanity has been conflicted by his psychology and rationalization. When the damnable Iblīs uttered these loaded words, the answer he immediately got should have been expected, **“He [Allah] said, ‘Thereupon, descend from it [the garden] for it is not for you to express arrogance in it [the garden]. Exit [from it] for you are [to be] among the abased.’”**

Notable here is that Iblīs' knowledge of Allah (ﷻ) did not benefit him. Iblīs' belief in the existence of Allah and in His attributes was of no value. Such is the case with everyone who hears Allah's words and understands His instructions, and then chooses to contrive his own point of view that hinders obedience to Him. When the Creator speaks, it is the responsibility of created beings, to whatever extent possible, to listen, understand, and obey. The mental attitude and physical conduct that runs contrary to Allah's words is what defines the very essence of *kufri*, that is, denial of Allah, even though the denier — Iblīs and his likes in this case — know who Allah is and affirm His existence. This does not mean that Iblīs was short on knowledge of Allah and who He is, or that Iblīs denied the existence of Allah. Rather, despite knowing and affirming all this, the source of all evil deliberately and consciously disobeyed Allah. And with that, Iblīs was expelled from the garden of bliss and from the fortune of grace; hence he deserved to be damned.

It was at this critical juncture in time that blaming another for your own faults — that is, false pride — became a characteristic of evil. And so Iblīs will never forget that all this happened to him, not because of his own arrogance and narcissism, but because of a “slimy” and “scummy” human Adam (ﷺ). He blames his ejection from the heavenly garden on man. Out of this fertile ground

emerged the follow-up attendee to false pride: revenge. By fingering Adam, Iblīs set himself up to take revenge, and from here on, function according to his wrong and wicked predisposition,

**Said [Iblīs], “Reprieve me until the Day when all shall be raised from the dead.” [And Allah] replied, “Verily, you shall be among those who are granted a respite.” [Whereupon Iblīs] said, “Now that You have foiled me, I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Your straight way, and shall most certainly fall upon them openly as well as in a manner beyond their awareness, and from their right and from their left: and most of them You will not find grateful” (7:14–17).**

These words of authority demonstrate Iblīs to be baneful and offensive. There is no equivocation from him about going down the wrong course. He reveals himself to be a sore and spiteful character who is willing to eternalize his efforts of subtle and severe sabotage of the will of Allah (ﷻ) as pertains to man. Henceforth, due to Iblīs, trouble and danger would be a threat to human nature.

Even though all men of future generations were not present at this scene, Allah is nonetheless alerting them to what would mislead them from His straight path. Knowing fully well who his Sustainer is, Iblīs asked Allah to give him an abatement until the Day of Resurrection. Iblīs’ asking Allah (ﷻ) to give him time is indicative of the fact that he knew exactly who Allah is, and that he will not be able to do anything beyond the “permission” and “possibility” of action and endeavor. Allah then honored Iblīs’ petition for more time. But this respite of time will come to an end on the Day of Ascertained Time (Yawm al-Waqt al-Ma’lūm) as stated in another *sūrah*. This would mean that Iblīs’ troublemaking and retaliatory reactions against man will terminate at the first sounding of the trumpet, signaling the end of the world as a prelude to the dawning of the Day of Judgement.

Getting his wish, Iblīs’ haughtiness comes to the fore as he vows to retaliate against Adam (ﷺ) for what Allah has caused him



to suffer. For Iblīs, Adam is a convenient foil; he knows he brought all this upon himself because he disobeyed Allah, as his ego (pride) prevented him from humbling himself before man. It was the creation of a social and human Adam that revealed those devilish traits responsible for the damnation of Iblīs. Thereupon, Iblīs set himself on a course to mislead that creature Allah (ﷻ) created and honored,

**Now that You have bewildered me, I shall most definitely lie in ambush for them all along Your straight path, and shall most certainly fall upon them openly as well as in a manner beyond their awareness, and from their right and from their left: and most of them You will not find to be grateful (7:16–17).**

Iblīs will locate himself on the passageway to Allah, trying to misinform or trap any of Adam's descendants. He will try to dissuade them through all manner of "shortcuts," "alternate routes," or "easier ways." It is clear from this *āyah* that Iblīs will come at man from nearly every direction, and that, from the human crowd, many (though not all) will fall prey to his strategies. Implicit in this *āyah* is the fact that Iblīs' multi-faceted approach to mislead man is what distances the latter from thanking and appreciating Allah (ﷻ); hence man's tendency to not be grateful is attributable less to human nature in and of itself than to the evil Iblīs.

This "propensity" toward evil is part of the overall design of human life. Man has to either struggle to avoid such evil and keep Allah's company, or cave in to evil temptations, committing evil deeds, and ultimately bearing the consequences. Thus is the range of freedom for the exercise of free will and thus will be its consequences on the Day of Accountability and Judgement.

In taking a closer look at what Iblīs means by approaching man from every direction so that he would swerve away from the direct path to Allah (ﷻ), consider what exists in the vernacular of the day in the public space. It was Iblīs' ego and self-centeredness that prevented him from obeying Allah. Therefore, it follows that

he will try to exploit man through the latter's own "ego." One such social exhibition of self-importance and self-love with a degree of contempt for others is called *ethnicity* (from the Greek word *ethnos* meaning *a people*). This refers to a people's own sense of cultural identity and favorable position; a social term that overlaps with such concepts as race, nation, class, and even religion.

Social scientists use the term ethnic group to refer to groups or societies who feel a common sense of identity, often based on a traditional shared culture, language, religion, and customs. It may or may not include common territory, skin color, or common descent. The US, for example, is often described as a multiethnic society because many members would describe themselves as members of an ethnic group (Jewish, black, or Irish, for example) as well as their national one (American).

Another one of Iblīs' setups along *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* is *racial discrimination*, treating someone in a particular way because of his race or ethnicity; also known as racialism or racism. The term is usually understood to mean negative discrimination, that is, disadvantaging people relative to other social groups. Negative racial discrimination often occurs in housing and employment and is "illegal" in some contemporary societies, though often difficult to prove in a court of law.

The habitual or characteristic mental attitude of Iblīs has spawned so many divisive terms and derogatory notions in the human family. As a case in point, racial terminology and racist politics are now worldwide phenomena, not only in experience, but also in methods of analysis as alluded to earlier. In thinking of the following groups of people on an inferiority-superiority scale in today's social climate, one will realize how Iblīs has subverted the sense of equality and reciprocity in the human condition,

1. *Aboriginal Australians* or *Aborigines* – the indigenous inhabitants of Australia, the first of whom it is said reached the continent tens of thousands of years ago. By 1788, when European colonization began, there were about 600 European-defined territorial groups, subsisting on hunting and gathering, with a population in the range of 300,000 to a million. Numbers

then fell dramatically, partly through European imposed conflict, and partly through European diseases, especially the smallpox epidemics of 1789 and 1829. By 1933, the population had fallen to around 66,000; it then steadily increased, and now it is said they are around 300,000.

At first, the Europeans portrayed the Aboriginal people as noble savages, but this image quickly gave way to contempt, and policies were designed to turn them into Christians with European lifestyles. In the late-19th century, Social Darwinist ideas were influential, maintaining that Aborigines were an inferior race incapable of self-management and destined to die out. In Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), the government removed the last survivors of massacre and disease to Flinders Island in the late-1820s; the last full-blooded Aborigine, Truganini, died there in 1876. A community of people with mixed descent remains in Tasmania. Elsewhere in Australia, strenuous efforts were made to confine them to government reserves or Christian missions.

Aborigines have not accepted their lot passively. In the 1950s they began moving into the cities of southeast Australia and formed advancement groups; but it was not until the mid-1960s that activism became prominent. In 1965 Charles Perkins became the first Aboriginal university graduate, and helped organize "freedom rides" in New South Wales to protest against discrimination. In 1967, 90.8% of Australian voters approved a referendum that granted the federal government the power to count Aborigines in the census and to make laws on their behalf, thus enabling them to be provided with official assistance. Although their condition has since improved, they remain the most disadvantaged group in Australian society. Their disadvantages were the basis for a campaign, begun in 1972, for "land rights." Opposition to their claims has come from mining and pastoral interests, and from conservative governments, particularly in Queensland. Nevertheless, by the mid-1980s, Aborigines had gained freehold title to about 6% of Australia, and were in the process of being

- granted further areas. The landmark Mabo decision in the Australian High Court recognized, for the first time, that Aboriginal people had rights to land in common law based on prior occupancy of the continent.
2. *affirmative action* – policies requiring institutions to act “affirmatively” in employment practices to avoid discrimination on grounds of race, ethnic origin, gender, disability, or sexual orientation; usually found in the United States. Executive Order 10925 issued by US President Kennedy contained the first use of the term. Affirmative action policies can range from encouraging the employment of minorities to the setting of quotas of minorities to be employed.
  3. *African American/Negro* (in the USA)
  4. *African Caribbeans* (in Britain)
  5. *Afrocentricity* – a philosophical and theoretical perspective, as distinct from a particular system, based on the essential core of the idea that interpretation and explanation based on the role of the Africans as subjects is most consistent with reality. It became a growing intellectual idea in the 1980s as scores of African American, African Brazilian, Caribbean, and African scholars adopted an Afrocentric orientation to data. Afrocentricity is generally opposed to theories that “dislocate” Africans in the periphery of human thought and experience.
  6. *American Indians* – the indigenous inhabitants of the American continent, who arrived during the last glacial period (according to some estimates, 14–40,000 years ago, but the issue is controversial) from Asia, crossing from Siberia over the Bering Strait, perhaps in three waves. They settled in North America, where the earliest sites are now thought to date from circa 17,000 years ago, extended into Middle America, and reached what is now Chile by circa 13,000 years ago. Common origins with the Chinese northeast of the Yenisei River have been suggested. There are similarities (for example, knife shapes) between Indian and late Palaeolithic/Neolithic Chinese cultures, and there are stylistic resemblances between the totem-pole art of North and South America and Shang dynasty shamanistic motifs.

7. *Apartheid* – meaning *apartness* in Afrikaans, it is the name given to the historic South African policy of “separate development”; a rigid system of racial segregation designed to maintain white supremacy. Apartheid policy officially came into effect when South Africa’s National Party came to power in 1948. It officially classified the South African population into whites (13%), Africans (77%), Coloreds (of mixed descent, 8%), and Asians (2%). From the late-1970s to early-1980s the government relaxed apartheid laws slightly, lifting some occupational restrictions, desegregating some public facilities, and repealing, in 1985, the 1948 law prohibiting intermarriage.
8. *Aryan* – a prehistoric people and their language, an extinct member of the Indo-European language family. Aryans reputedly colonized Iran and northern India, and gave rise to the Indian subcontinent’s Indo-Aryan languages. Nazi Germany embraced unscientific notions of Germanic peoples as the purest members of an Aryan race of Indo-European-speaking peoples responsible for human progress. The term Aryan is no longer regarded as scientifically valid within anthropology.
9. *Asian American* – among America’s earliest settlers with a long history in the continent. Large-scale Chinese immigration began with the Gold Rush in 1849. For more than three decades, their labor contributed to the rapid economic development of the new nation. From 1849–1880, over 200,000 Chinese entered America. The gold they mined filled the coffers of the US Treasury, and without their muscle, the transcontinental railroad that tied the country together and created a national economy would have been delayed for years. They tilled the soil and fed the low-income migrants streaming west from the eastern and middle parts of the US. However, when the economy faltered, the Chinese, despite being pioneer settlers, became victims of prejudice and persecution, often identified with the “anti-coolie movement.” Exclusion laws introduced in 1882 prevented migration from China.
10. *assimilation* – the process of becoming similar; the primary sense of this word has been overlaid in sociology by one of its

subsidiary meanings, that which denotes the absorption of nutriment by a living organism — as the body is said to assimilate food. The popularity of the organic analogy in early-20th-century sociology increased the tendency to give assimilation this secondary meaning, as did the concern in the United States at that time about the influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean countries. These were suspected of being of inferior stock and less easily assimilable than immigrants from northwestern Europe. Thus under the pressures of the age, assimilation came to be equated with Americanization just as in Britain in the 1960s it was identified with Anglicization.

11. *Black feminism* – a term often used to designate an intellectual and political movement, referring specifically to the work of black female scholars and activists who are rethinking black experiences from a feminist perspective and revising white feminist politics from an Afrocentric perspective. This work draws on a long history of black women's political consciousness and resistance, a history that demonstrates (i) the simultaneous operation and interlocking nature of gender, race, and other oppressions; and (ii) the centrality of black women's experience and knowledge to political struggle.
12. *Black Power* – a movement in the 1960s representing another period of cultural renaissance in black America, similar in some ways to the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Many independent black cultural and educational institutions were founded during the Black Power movement, which lasted from the mid-1960s to the early-1970s. The Black Power movement in the United States — also referred to in some writings as the Black Consciousness or Black Arts movement — was significant for the debates it generated regarding the appropriate political strategies that should be pursued by African Americans.
13. *capitalism* – refers to a certain type of socio-economic structure bounded by a particular historical period. However, there are substantial disagreements between Marxists and non-Marxists,

- and between various strands of Marxism, over the defining features of the socio-economic structure and historical period.
14. *caste* – the concept has been applied to a wide variety of social institutions, both human and non-human. Entomologists have used it to describe the functionally and anatomically discrete morphs (workers, soldiers, etc.) of many species of eusocial insects, especially ants, bees, and termites. Social scientists have spoken of castes in societies as different as those of Spanish American colonies until the 19th century, the Indian subcontinent, 20th-century South Africa and the United States, and pre-colonial West Africa.
  15. *Caucasian* – a name introduced by J.F. Blumenbach in 1795 to designate one of the “five principal varieties of mankind.” Europeans were classified as Caucasians. The name was chosen because Blumenbach believed the neighborhood of Mt. Caucasus, and especially its southern slope, produced the most beautiful race of men, and was probably the home of the first men. He thought they were probably white in complexion since it was easier for white to degenerate into brown than for a dark color to become white. The other four “principal varieties” were the Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay races.
  16. *colonialism* – from the Latin *colonia* for *cultivate* (especially new land), the term refers to the practices, theories, and attitudes involved in establishing and maintaining an empire, this being a relationship in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another polity, typically of a distant territory. Among the several meanings of imperialism (from the Latin *imperium* for *command* or *dominion*) is the belief in the desirability of acquiring colonies and dependencies. It is easier to understand the complexity of race and ethnic relations when considering the historical aspects of colonialism, for many contemporary race-relations situations are the eventual result of the conquest and exploitation of poor and relatively weak countries by relatively more powerful nations.
  17. *color line* – symbolic division between “racial” groups in societies where skin pigmentation is a criterion of social

- status. It is, of course, most clearly and rigidly defined in the most racist societies, that is, in societies founded upon ascribing different rights and privileges to members of different racial groups. If access to social resources (such as schooling, housing, employment, and the like) is contingent on race, racial classification must be maintained and racial membership must be kept as unambiguous as possible. This is true even when racial discrimination is supposedly benign, as with affirmative action in the United States, for instance.
18. *Darwinism* – the theory of evolution proposed jointly by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, and later expanded upon by Darwin in *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859). According to observation, individuals of a species show variation, and on average, more offspring are produced than are needed to replace the parents, but population size remains more or less stable in nature. There must therefore be competition for survival, and it is the best adapted (the fittest) variants that survive and reproduce. Evolution occurs by means of natural selection acting on individual variation, resulting in the survival of the fittest. The discovery of the genetic mechanism causing variation has resulted in a modified version of the theory, known as neo-Darwinism.
  19. *emancipation* – being liberated or set free from servitude or subjection of any kind. The changing role of women in social, economic, and particularly in political terms in the 19th and 20th centuries, is sometimes referred to as the “emancipation of women.” In the UK, the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act freed Roman Catholics from the civil disabilities imposed on them by English law. In 1861, the emancipation of Russian serfs was proclaimed. In 1862, US President Abraham Lincoln issued an edict freeing all slaves, known as the Emancipation Proclamation; the 13th Amendment of the US Constitution declared the abolition of slavery throughout the US.
  20. *empowerment* – in the United States, the term has not been defined specifically and analytically in the social sciences; rather, it has been used in different, even contradictory ways.



In some discussions, it refers to a sort of psychological liberation; that is, someone has been “empowered” to act on his or her own behalf. In other discussions it may refer to the capacity of individuals or a group to pursue an economic agenda free of interference from excessive government.

21. *environmental racism* – this term has its origins in a 1987 report by the US Commission on Racial Justice, which found a pattern of “environmental racism” in the siting of toxic waste dumps and incinerators, and concluded that most of the largest and most dangerous landfills were in communities with majority black or Latino populations. Now, it refers more generally to the various ways in which minorities fare badly in relation to the quality of the built environment; poor housing quality (and the failure to secure renovation grants); poor location; high noise and chemical pollution levels; and so on.
22. *exploitation* – this has both a narrow and a more broad usage. The narrow usage is found within Marxist writing to refer to the process by which a class of non-producers is able to live without working by extracting a surplus from a class of direct producers. This process of exploitation takes a number of different historical and structural forms. Within a feudal society, the serfs produced crops and other items both for themselves and for the various levels of the aristocracy, either by directly working the lord’s land (and handing over to him all the produce), or by handing over a proportion of the produce from their activity on their customary land. Despite variations in the specific form that the transfer of surplus took, what characterized the process was a legal/customary constraint upon the serfs to produce directly for the dominant class. The broad usage of the term goes beyond class to include races exploiting races, nations exploiting nations, genders exploiting genders, a religious group exploiting another, a military exploiting civilians, etc.
23. *ghetto* – from the Old Venetian word *geto* for *foundry*; any deprived area occupied by a minority group, whether voluntarily or not. Originally a ghetto was the area of a town where Jews

were compelled to live, decreed by a law enforced by papal bull (1555). The term came into use in 1516 when the Jews of Venice were expelled to an island within the city containing an iron foundry. Ghettos were abolished, except in Eastern Europe, in the 19th century, but the concept and practice were revived by the Germans and Italians from 1940–1945. In the US, the term refers to low-income areas of urban blight in big cities, where African Americans have traditionally lived, often called “the projects.”

24. *hegemony* – from the Greek word *hegemonic* for *authority*; political dominance of one power over others in a group in which all are supposedly equal. The term, first used for the dominance of Athens over the other Greek city-states, was later applied to Prussia within Germany, and, in more recent times, to the US and the USSR with regard to the rest of the world.
25. *hereditarianism* – the theory that heredity is the primary influence on human behavior, intelligence, or other characteristics. The argument that racial differences are hereditary arose in opposition to the belief that, since all mankind is descended from Adam and Eve, diversity must be a product of adaptation to environment. In 1520, Paracelsus (alchemist and physician born in 15th-century Switzerland) maintained that peoples “found in out-of-the-way islands” were not descended from the sons of Adam; early hereditarian theories followed this thesis by claiming that racial differences had existed from the beginning of humanity.

At the start of the 19th century, the influential French anatomist George Cuvier classified *Homo sapiens* as divided into three subspecies: Caucasian, Mongolian, and Ethiopian, each of which was further subdivided on geographical, linguistic, and physical grounds. He represented the races as constituting a hierarchy and contended that differences in culture and mental quality were produced by differences in physique. This line of reasoning was developed into an international school of racial topology as expressed in Britain by Charles Hamilton Smith (1848) and Robert Knox (1850); in France

- by Arthur de Gobineau (1853); in the United States by Josiah Clark Nott and George Robbins Gliddon (1854); and in Germany by Karl Vogt (1863). This school has more often been referred to as that of “scientific racism.” Its adherents maintained that racial types were permanent forms, at least for the period for which evidence was available, and might have been separately created. The stricter topologists, such as Knox and Nott, believed that various human types were adapted to particular zoological provinces. Just as marsupials (pouched mammals) were peculiar to Australia, so Australian Aborigines exemplified the kind of men who belonged in that province. Other animals would not long survive there. It was the height of foolishness for Europeans to attempt to colonize North America, Australia, or tropical regions because they were not suited to these environments; if they attempted it their descendants would degenerate and die out. The topological theory of racial differences appeared some three decades before the main phase of European imperial expansion and its doctrines provided little, if any, support for imperialist campaigns.
26. *intelligence and race* – in the Euro-American context the issue of racial differences in intelligence has raged for well over a century, especially in relation to people of African descent. Blacks have long been regarded in the West as intellectually inferior to whites and Asians, and, starting in the 19th century, the racist doctrines of Arthur de Gobineau, of Houston Stewart Chamberlain (an intellectual mentor of Adolf Hitler), and others, have sought to give the stamp of scientific approval to theories of mental differences by race. With WWI, when IQ tests began to be widely applied to army recruits, school pupils, and other groups in the United States, interest in racial differences in intelligence was given another boost. Test results were used to “prove” the inferiority not only of blacks, but also of eastern and southern European immigrants.
27. *Jim Crow Laws* – a nickname for US state laws passed after the official end of slavery to keep African Americans in a segregated subordinate condition. They were abolished in the mid-

- 20th century as a result of popular protest, US Supreme Court decisions, and federal policies.
28. *Ku Klux Klan* – the name of successive racist/terrorist organizations in the USA, thought to derive from the Greek word *kyklos* for *circle*. The first was founded after the US Civil War (1861–1865) to oppose Reconstruction and the new rights being granted to African Americans; the members, disguised in robes and hoods, terrorized the former slaves and their sympathizers in the country areas of the southern US. It faded after federal measures were passed against it, but was re-established in a stronger and wider-based form after WWI. This time, its targets were Catholics, foreigners, Jews, and organized labor, as well as African Americans. It gained great political power, but the movement ended by 1944. It was revived by the fear of communism in the 1950s, then by opposition to the civil rights movements in the 1960s. Much violence was unleashed in the (confederate) South before strong measures from the federal government (under US President Johnson) imposed some control. The organization is still sporadically active in various parts of the USA.
  29. *Latinos* – the designation of Latinos or Hispanics (the terms are used interchangeably) refers to persons of Spanish origin who come from Spanish-speaking Latin America, as well as from the Iberian peninsula. The term also includes individuals whose ancestors come from those regions of the world. Journalists and leaders from the Latino communities began to refer to the 1980s as the decade of the Hispanics. Much of the attention was focused upon the significant growth rate among persons of Hispanic origin and the potential for impacting the social, cultural, and political fabric of the United States. The population growth was accounted for by a young population with a high fertility rate, and the significant influx of immigrants from Latin America. Now, there are over 40 million Latinos in the United States, and demographic projections suggest that by 2020, they will be the largest ethnic minority, with over 50 million. Much of this immigrant traffic has come

- from Mexico, since its revolution at the turn of the last century, with more dramatic increases since the 1960s. The other major contributing source countries have been Cuba and Puerto Rico. Most recently, Central American refugees have migrated from their countries to flee political instability and physical violence.
30. *minorities* – in the field of race and ethnic relations, the term *minority* has been confusing because of the double component of its meaning, the numerical and the political. In the United States, where the term has become entrenched in official terminology, a minority group has primarily been associated with terms like disadvantaged, underprivileged, or some such euphemism for a combination of political oppression, economic exploitation, and social discrimination. In recent American usage, the noun *minority* can refer both to a racial or ethnic group, or to an individual member thereof. Since the groups that are so defined (principally African Americans, American Indians, Latinos, and groups of Asian origin) are all numerical minorities of the total US population, this usage is relatively unproblematic in North America.
  31. *multiculturalism* – the idea or ideal of harmonious coexistence of differing cultural or ethnic groups in pluralist society. However, the principal uses of the term have covered a range of meanings that have included multiculturalism as an ideology, a discourse, and as a cluster of policies and practices. At the ideological level, multiculturalism has included loosely related themes incorporating acceptance of different ethnic groups, religions, cultural practices, and linguistic diversity within a pluralistic society. When applied to policies, multiculturalism has covered a range of formal state policies with two main purposes: maintaining harmony between diverse ethnic groups and structuring the relationships between the state and ethnic minorities.
  32. *multiracial/biracial* – terms typically describing persons who have parents of different “racial” heritage. Biracialism refers to those with two heritages, usually one black parent, one white;

while multiracialism is a more inclusive term, suggesting a plurality of heritages through several generations.

33. *nationalism* – refers to an ideological orientation that was formulated after the French Revolution. It became a major determinant of political action during the course of the 19th century throughout Western Europe and, in the 20th century, throughout the world.
34. *negritude* – a movement begun in the 1930s by the Martinique-born poet Aime Cesaire and other French-speaking black artists who wanted to rediscover ancient African values and modes of thought so that blacks could feel pride and dignity in their heritage. In its broadest sense, negritude was “the awareness and development of African values,” according to Leopold Senghor, who helped develop the original ideas into a coherent political movement.

Though principally an artistic and literary critique of Western society and its systematic suppression of blacks’ potentiality by dissociating them from what were regarded as their true roots, negritude took on a more programmatic dimension with Senghor, who became president of Senegal. The impulse was, according to L.V. Thomas, “the rediscovery of one’s past, one’s culture, one’s ancestors, and one’s language.” Inspired by the African ethnographer and historian Leo Frobenius, Senghor delved into African culture, to which he attributed the characteristic of being “Ethiopian,” as a way of coming to grips with the different conception of reality he presumed existed in ancient African societies.

35. *neo-Nazism* – from the Greek *neos*, meaning *new* or *revived*, and the German phonetic spelling of the first two syllables of *Nationalsozialist*, the fascist party that seized political control of Germany in 1933 under Adolph Hitler. The term refers to contemporary groups, parties, and organizations that exhibit features associated with the original Nazi party: authoritarian, hierarchical, right-wing government; opposition to democracy, liberalism, pluralism, and an assembly of minority groups, especially Jews and blacks.

36. *patriarchy* – a social system that emerged during the age of antiquity and continues in various forms to the present. It has existed in various types of nation-states. Whether feudal, capitalist, or socialist, the essential underpinnings of such a system have not differed. In all patriarchal settings, dominance in power and authority have been male-centered, primarily expressed in female sex-gender control and economic discrimination.
37. *political correctness* – a much-derided set of guiding principles and directives, political correctness (PC) became a virtual orthodoxy at many US universities in the early-1990s. While it was based on apparent sound academic concepts, its enactment was quickly interpreted as a form of censorship. It aimed to redress the balance of North American academies, which were understood to be mired in the same racism and sexism that existed in and was promoted by much American culture. The pervasive character of racism and sexism ensured that the language of instruction and the content of curricula reflected these. Given that knowledge is disseminated through educational institutions, it was thought unlikely that such knowledge would serve emancipatory goals unless it consciously rejected racism and sexism, and actively embraced alternatives based on multicultural, anti-racist, and anti-sexist articles.
38. *skinheads* – even while many other white supremacist movements were declining at the end of the 20th century (though the beginning of the 21st century has seen a resurgence), skinheads continued to attract adherents from all over Europe and the United States. They followed the examples of their British counterparts in the 1970s, who formed alliances with neo-fascist organizations such as the National Front (NF) and the British Movement (BM) and linked up with established political movements. Although they have no formal organizational structure themselves, skinheads have been tightly associated with such groups as the Ku Klux Klan, the ADL (which on the surface opposes racism but is a racist promoter of the nefarious types), Germany's ultra-nationalists, and other Euro-Americans who cannot abide by coexistence.

39. *slavery* – the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised, according to the United States Slavery Convention (Article 1, Geneva, 1926). The condition invariably involves the forced, un-remunerated labor of the person held as property and his or her exclusion from any kind of participation in politics or civil rights. The process by which this condition comes about is the “slave trade,” defined by the League of Nations (precursor to the United Nations) as all acts involved in the capture and acquisition of a slave with a view to selling or exchanging him; all acts of disposal by sale or exchange of a slave acquired with a view to being sold or exchanged; and in general, every act of trade or transport of slaves (United States Slavery Convention, Article 1, Geneva, 1926).
40. *Third World* – those countries that are less developed than the industrialized free-market countries of the West (First World) and the industrialized former communist countries (Second World). Third World countries are the poorest, as measured by their income per head of population, and are concentrated in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. They are divided into low-income countries, middle-income countries, and upper-middle-income countries. The Third World has more than 75% of the world’s population but consumes only 20% of its resources. In 1990, the average income per head of population in the northern hemisphere was \$12,500, which is 18 times higher than that in the southern hemisphere.
41. *underclass* – the concept of underclass has been used by sociologists to describe the bottom stratum of complex societies, especially in the urban context. Underclass refers to a heterogeneous group, below the stable employed working class, which is regarded as beyond the pale of “respectable” society. It includes such social categories as the chronically unemployed, vagrants or transients, the criminal “underground,” some occupational groups considered defiling or immoral (such as prostitutes), and sometimes, some despised outcast groups that may be either ethnically or racially defined (for



- example, gypsies in Europe, untouchables in India, the Burakumin of Japan, or “ghetto blacks” in the United States).
42. *white flight* – a term implying disillusionment with, even resentment of, social change. It refers to the movement of whites from neighborhoods and schools that have experienced recent changes in their ethnic composition. The nature of this change is sometimes voluntary — the pursuit of employment, perhaps, or cheap housing. It might also be contrived, however, stemming from a general commitment to what is known as the *contact hypothesis*. This is the belief that direct contact between whites and blacks will lessen the formers’ fears about the latters’ cultures and lifestyles, attenuate racial prejudice, and enhance the likelihood of integration, racial harmony, and social stability.
  43. *xenophobia* – a term that means literally *fear of strangers* (from the Greek words *xenon*, for *strange*, and *phobia*, for *fear* or *aversion*). Once regarded as a psychological condition — to describe persons who feared or abhorred groups regarded as “outsiders” — its more recent application has been in the context of attacks on immigrants and asylum seekers in Western Europe.

With this relatively small sampling of the attitudes, notions, ideas, policies, ideologies, politics, and philosophies that come from the “superiority-inferiority” complex, the following *āyah* should be understood to apply to all the racists, ethnocentrics, and exclusionary elites of the world who mouth the words of Iblīs, “[**And Allah**] said, ‘Go forth from here, disgraced and disowned! [**And**] as for such of them as follow you [Iblīs], I will most assuredly fill Hell with you all!’” When man cannot honor and respect fellow man the way Allah (ﷻ) features him, then he is constrained to echo the words of the despised Iblīs. The time that was given to Iblīs to carry on with his vengeful and hateful psychology works simultaneously for man to prove whether he will honor and grace his fellow man or, conversely, rationalize the categories of prejudice and hate that are included in all the concepts above.

### How Satan Capitalized on the Duality of Human Nature

Now, the introductory *āyāt* of this *sūrah* transition to the constitution of man. The details and “mechanics” of creation cannot be known with unfailing certainty as they belong within the realm of Allah’s power and not within the scope of human observation. Nevertheless, there are myriad *āyāt* in the Qur’an that shed light on the creation of man (social humans), and these may contribute to our understanding of how insignificant the physical composition of man is,

**And He created out of it [human essence] its mate (4:1).**

**And We created man out of recombinant clay (23:12).**

**And We rendered [his offspring] an offshoot of an embryo from within a fortified moor (23:13).**

This “substance” of man is what provoked Iblīs to entertain a condescending and contemptuous view of Adam (ﷺ), to the extent that he could not reconcile his feelings and notions of superiority with what he perceived to be Adam’s low quality, low rank, and low status.

After Iblīs was expelled from the garden, Allah (ﷻ) addresses Adam and his mate, **“And [as for you], O Adam, dwell you and your wife in this garden, and eat, both of you, whatever you may wish; but do not approach this one tree, lest you become evildoers!”** The *āyāt* do not indicate how Adam’s wife appeared at this moment. This detail in history has not been explained, neither here nor anywhere else in this holy Text. Historical narratives coming out of the corruption of previous scripture that suggest she was created from the rib of Adam (ﷺ) are for the most part *isrā’iliyāt*. Even though there is a “*ṣaḥīḥ*” hadith corroborating this fiction, no one should place much credibility in such reports or accounts. What cannot be doubted is that Allah created for Adam a spouse of his own basic human nature and composition. Thus they became for all intents and purposes husband and wife. Similarly, what is known of “(pro)creation” via this reliable source (the Qur’an) is

that Allah initiates worldly life through the union of male and female (matrimony), **“And in everything have We created twosomes, so that you might become conscious [of His efficacy]” (51:49).** The spark of life begins with the pairing of the sexes. This is one of Allah’s *sunan*. With this in mind, Eve (ﷺ) may have been created coterminously with Adam, in the same way he was created.

Whatever the details of their creation were, the meanings here are pertinent to both Adam and his consort (ﷺ). As Allah (ﷻ) introduces them to the gravity of their lives, the early development of man’s relationship with his Sustainer through the medium of responsibility takes shape. Man immediately learns that he is Allah’s *khalifah* (surrogate, deputy) on earth. This much was already ascertained from the *āyah* in *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, **“And lo! Your Sustainer said to the angels, ‘Behold, I am about to establish upon earth a successor’” (2:30).** Then, Allah reveals a fundamental aspect of His relationship with man,

**And [as for you], O Adam, dwell you and our wife in this garden, and eat, both of you, whatever you may wish; but do not approach this one tree, lest you become violators (7:19).**

Allah’s words give no information about the type of tree or plant. This deliberate lacuna underscores the fact that the focus here is not the “attraction of a certain tree or plant,” but rather the order that came from Allah (ﷻ). Adam and Eve (ﷺ) were free to enjoy all of the wholesome fruits of that garden of “seventh heaven” — that is, everything was *ḥalāl* and accessible — except for the one item forbidden to them, per Allah’s command. This “favorable restriction of freedom” is necessary for man to learn that “not everything goes.” It serves to heighten man’s discipline and fortify his willpower. In this manner, man, through the few forbidden things in life, conquers his whims and lusts. The strength of this self-control is what sets man apart from the lower created beings. Humans are expected to control their compulsions and obsessions and not be controlled by them.

As an active participant in how the role of man would play out, Iblīs now begins to execute the destructive strategy he outlined earlier, primarily because Adam and his partner (ﷺ) were honored by Allah in a heavenly ceremony when the angels paid respect to a new form of intelligent life. However, unlike the angels and Iblīs, man was created with a dual propensity, a binary nature. Iblīs obviously recognized that man's nature is vulnerable when it is not observant of Allah (ﷻ); man can easily be tempted through his longing, yearning, and arousal,

**Thereupon Satan whispered to the two with a view to making them conscious of their nakedness, of which [hitherto] they had been unaware; and he said, "Your Sustainer has but forbidden you this tree lest you two become as [angels], or lest you live forever." And he swore to them, "Certainly, I am of those who wish you well indeed!" (7:20–21).**

Notice that before communicating with man, the evil one was called Iblīs, but when he spoke his misleading words, he is denominated as Satan. How Satan whispered or murmured to Adam and Eve (ﷺ) is not explained. Given that man has no physical or material contact with Satan, he is not equipped with the necessary experience to understand how this satanic communication with Adam took place. Once again, the important thing here is not the "how," but the "what." On the undisputable authority of the Qur'an, Satan did, in fact, communicate to Adam and Eve that eating from the prohibited tree is desirable, suitable, and lovable. This satanic message, delivered through the vulnerable channels in the human psyche, lies well within the capabilities of its composer. But this vulnerability in human nature, though it can cause problems for man, can be compensated for or diminished through a serious and responsible relationship with Allah (ﷻ), a keen awareness of His presence, and an undaunting conformity to His commands.

Entrapped by this satanic undertone or susurrations (whispering), Adam and Eve (ﷺ) would become cognizant of each other's

nudity — something heretofore they were oblivious of. This was Satan's objective. Though the two did have an anatomical form, none of its features were visually titillating or evoking of shame so as to be considered "private parts." Satan was exploiting the deepest mania and strongest passion in human nature, in addition to indulging man's profoundest fancy of enjoying a higher status, a life with no end, and a life with no uncertainty, **"He [Satan] said, 'The reason why your Sustainer barred you from this tree is to keep you from becoming angels or immortals.'"**

The word *malakayn* in the above *āyah* refers to *two angels*, meaning that if they were to eat from the forbidden tree, the two of them (Adam and Eve) would acquire the rank of angels. An alternate *qirā'ah*, however, entails the same word to be enunciated as *malikayn* (the vowel associated with the *lām* goes from *a* to *i*), which means *two kings* or *two barons*.<sup>146</sup> This meaning is corroborated by the *āyah*,

**But Satan whispered to him, saying, "O Adam! Shall I lead you to the tree of life eternal, and [thus] to a kingdom that will never decay?" (20:120).**

Man's desire for everlasting life represents the passion of procreation. Sexual attraction is the means and the ardor for continuity and perpetuity. Hence both explanations of the word are valid and complementary. Whether Adam (ﷺ) desired to become an angel — to bypass who he is by creation and nature; or he desired to become a sovereign king — to promote himself above his God-given state of nature and social rank; Satan knew how to inflame the human passion toward these false ambitions. Satan realized that man would be inclined toward Allah (ﷻ) in his "state of nature," so he lied to interrupt man's relationship with his Creator, **"And he [Satan] swore to them, 'Verily, I am of those who wish you well indeed!'"**

At this decisive and fervent moment in the formative history of mankind, under the pressure of man's compulsive nature and Satan's unfaithful oath, Adam and his spouse (ﷺ) failed to remember that Satan is the type of implacable enemy who could never

will them any good. The emotional throes of this moment confounded their better judgement from what Allah (ﷻ) had told them — whether or not they understood the basis or purpose of the divine command. They should have realized that minding Allah’s instruction would have been more conducive to the achievement of any number of their ambitions, be it everlasting life, higher rank and status, power, etc. They were deluded away from Allah’s power and provision, getting carried away by their whims and impulses, and succumbing to Satan’s enticements,

**And thus he [Satan] led them on with deluding thoughts. But as soon as the two had tasted [the fruit] of the tree, they became conscious of their nakedness; and they began to cover themselves with pieced-together leaves from the garden. And their Sustainer called unto them, “Did I not forbid that tree to you and tell you, ‘Verily, Satan is your open enemy’?” (7:22–23).**

Satan succeeded, his deception worked, and the bitter consequences followed. Adam and Eve’s self-love and self-importance impelled them to disobey Allah (ﷻ) instead of obeying Him — even if it were for just a moment. Immediately, both Adam and Eve (ﷺ) realized they have “private parts.” Before this moment, it is as if the very notion of private parts did not exist. This could mean that their biological features were not meant to sexually arouse, one to the other. However, after they tasted the forbidden fruit, things changed, and they had to reflexively search for leaves they could piece together to cover their genitalia. As importantly, if not more so, they felt something they had not experienced to this point while in a sinless state: shame, an innate human feeling that attends exposed sexual parts of the body.

Adam and Eve (ﷺ) both understood the above words of reprimand to be issued because of their disregard for what Allah (ﷻ) had said to them. This development alludes to a key characteristic of human nature and tendency. Humans, because they forget and make mistakes, are weak and susceptible to Satan. In every

moment of his life, man is not always errorless or sinless. But, he understands when and where he is wrong. This simultaneously is the source of great weakness, if undisciplined, and great strength, if cultivated. Consistent with his ability to acknowledge mistakes is his capacity to “feel bad” about the wrong he has done. He can therefore ask Allah for forgiveness after repentance. However, he is neither given license to become a habitual sinner, nor to ask Allah to help him sin,

**The two replied, “O our Sustainer! We have sinned against ourselves — and unless You grant us forgiveness and bestow Your mercy upon us, we shall most certainly be of the losers!” (7:23).**

This is the quality of human nature that connects with Allah (ﷻ), the Sustainer. What opens up new horizons for man is his admission of misdeeds or faults, his regret, his recognition of human vulnerabilities and weakness, his imploring Allah for forgiveness, and, finally, his asking Allah for assistance and grace. Man should realize that he has no agency or potential save that which comes to him via His Lord and Sustainer, without whom life is but a loss.

Man, in his first learning lesson from Allah, became familiar with both his vulnerability as well as his capacity. This, he discovered through experience and trial and error. With his latent potential, man has the wherewithal to embark on an earthly course of responsibilities pertaining to his designation as Allah’s *khalifah*. However, in the way Allah created man’s reality, man will not be able to reach his potential and discharge his responsibility unless he has to contend with and struggle against an enemy,

**Said He, “Down with you, [and be henceforth] enemies to one another, having on earth your abode and livelihood for a while: there shall you live” — He added — “and there shall you die, and thereupon shall you be brought forth [on Resurrection Day]!” (7:24–25).**

They all came falling down to earth — to this earth. But where exactly? And where was this garden? The precise coordinates answering to such questions cannot be known by man, and so as before, Allah’s secure and satisfying words will have to serve the curious on this score. On the flip side, any “scientific” denial of this divine information should be considered erroneous and mendacious. Science has no access to this “unknown.” Those who are captivated by whatever minuscule scientific information exists today need to come to terms with the fact that what man does not know will always remain much, much more than what he will ever know.

Both Adam and his wife (ﷺ), as well as Satan and his own were sent down to earth, to be locked in a continual struggle until the Day of Judgement. This battle will be waged between the two natures of two creatures: one is strictly evil and the other has a propensity for the good as well as the bad. In a sense, this dichotomy is what circumscribes the motion of life on earth. Adam and his offspring were destined to live on earth, to establish themselves therein, to enjoy its offerings for a while, and then ultimately to die. Then they will be resurrected and called to account for either their compliance with Allah (ﷻ), and hence Paradise as a final abode, or their denial of Him, and hence the Fire.

This account of the dawning of man should give the committed Muslims pause to appreciate the value and honor associated with being Allah’s subjects — *‘ibādullāh*. Today’s mainstream secular perception of human life is not only trivial, but demeaning to the dignity man was endowed with by his Creator. Satellites and telescopes, discoveries and inventions that observe the universe and planet Earth, presenting their conclusions through an agnostic filter of reality, may prompt many to believe that human life is inconsequential relative to an unending universe and an unbounded time. But this is what happens to human beings, scientists or otherwise, who have no use for scripture or prophet. Man becomes petty when he redefines human life in the proportions of his physical world and not in the dimensions of his everlasting relationship with His Lord and Master. Allah (ﷻ) created this world along with its time and space dimensions, and He also created man along with his life and exis-



tence dimensions. He conferred upon humans their worth and value. So in man's relationship with Allah, he is "great" without an ego, he is valuable without a price, and he is big in spirit even when he is small in body.

Allah (ﷻ) makes it clear how dear man is to Him when man complies with and obeys Him. It is Allah who "personally" created man. This was not left to another medium or "agency." It was Allah who received man in a heavenly ambiance. He gave man access to the garden of exaltation, therein to eat and "enjoy himself" so long as he avoided the prohibited tree. After that, he awarded man the position of His viceroy (*khalifah*) on earth. He taught man words that can be used to refer to a person, a place, or a thing, words that can serve as a subject or object of a verb. This verbal knowledge lies at the root of man's intellect and intelligence, **"And He taught Adam all the language figures and sensation" (2:31)**. He gave humans the potential and the ability to live a wholesome and productive life. Allah sent man prophets and messengers to guide him through the course of time, telling him what to eat and what not to, whom to marry, and how to distribute his Lord's bounty. He showed man how to manage the ups and downs of life. As a measure of His magnanimity, Allah assigned mercy to Himself in His relationship with man: He willingly accepts man's repentance and apology. He is forthcoming even though man is prone to wallow in disobedience.

Beyond this, Allah (ﷻ) told the angels and other intelligent beings from His creation to bow down and show respect to Adam (ﷺ). Thereafter, these angels were assigned to protect man, in addition to performing other functions in the service of man. Angels were communicators of revelation to the apostles. Straightforward and forthright, they descend upon those who affirm Allah as their Sustainer; bring good news and victory to those men who are struggling for Him and His cause; and fight against His deniers in acts of war. Yet, these are only a few of the "favors" Allah has bestowed upon man — directly and indirectly, physically and spiritually, known and unknown.

### The Original Sin and Other Human Contrivances

Islamic books of history and *tafsir* have imported a considerable amount of information from slanted Jewish and skewed Christian sources. Much of these erroneous accounts of seminal events in the creation of man cannot agree with the Qur'anic final word on the subject. Key Christian theological themes concern the fall from grace, original sin, and the resultant inborn guilt (in man) passed on from generation to generation. In the story of the temptation in the Garden of Eden (Genesis, 3:1–24), the serpent (Satan) tempts Eve (ﷺ) to eat of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. God had already warned Adam and Eve, “Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.” But Satan argues that if Eve eats the apple, she will not die, but rather gain the ability to discern between good and evil, “and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” After Eve and Adam finally give in and eat the forbidden fruit, both are cast out of paradise by God.

Important in understanding the Christian concept of original sin is that this act distanced Adam and Eve (ﷺ) — representing humanity — from God. The disobedience is a sin due to the guilt that arises from freely choosing evil. By their own free will, they violated God's commandment. As a result, human nature fell into a state of confusion. From this moment on, humanity was no longer living in the sanctifying grace of the Creator, but in a state of freely choosing between good and evil, now weighed down with the indelible stain of Adam and Eve's sin — the original sin, a flaw inherited by all succeeding generations.

The Catholic Church finds a solution to this inherited sin in the crucifixion of Jesus (ﷺ), an event that allows people to regain redemption and be reconciled with God — in other words, vicarious atonement is necessitated by virtue of vicarious sin. In Martin Luther's (1483–1546) impression, humankind is wicked from the very beginning and lives in a state of sin; man lives separated from God and needs His grace, or unmerited mercy, for salvation. St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430CE), one of the noted church scholars, argued that without original sin people would not be able to distinguish between good and evil. In this sense, according to

philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1084), the “fall” was a decisive moment on the path to maturity, or the assumption of responsibility for one’s own actions. The serpent enticed humans out of a state of immaturity into a life of hope and fear, decision and error.

Christianity recognizes two angels above all: Michael and Gabriel, who appear both as heralds and destroyers. What exists today of the Bible relates that angels already existed before the creation of the world, but it does not go into further detail about their realm. Christians adopted not only the idea of angelic beings, but also the hierarchies of angels, from Judaism, a religion that recognizes many more angels; for instance the Books of Moses (⌘) speak of angelic guards on Paradise, and angels destroying the city of Sodom. In the current form of the New Testament, an angel informs Mary (⌘) that she will bear a child. The wings typical in images of angels symbolize their nearness to God as well as their ability to ascend beyond the level of mortals. The “fallen angel,” referring to Satan, according to Judeo-Christian beliefs (also known as Lucifer before the fall from Paradise), is thought to have been a special angel who, nonetheless, turned against God. Satan’s role is to lead people into temptation and test them. His appointed place is Hell, a complete and final separation from God’s love and mercy, as punishment for sinners. The other angels’ task is to continually reveal God and His will to humanity.

In the Bible there are two accounts of the creation of Adam and Eve (⌘). In one of them (Genesis, 1:1–2:4, Revised Standard Version), God (or Elohim), on the sixth day of Creation created all the living creatures and man “in his own image,” both “male and female.” God then blessed the couple, told them to be “fruitful and multiply,” and gave them dominion over all other things. According to another biblical source (Genesis, 2:4–7; 2:15–4:1; 4:25, New International Version), God, (or Yahweh), created Adam when the earth was still a void, forming him from the dust of the ground (*ha-adamah*) and breathing “into his nostrils the breath of life.” God then gave Adam the primeval Garden of Eden to tend but, on penalty of death, commanded him not to eat of the fruit of the “tree of knowledge of good and evil.” Subsequently God created other

animals but, finding these insufficient, put Adam to sleep, and from his rib fashioned Eve. The two were innocent until Eve yielded to the temptations of the serpent and Adam joined her in eating the forbidden fruit, whereupon they both recognized their nakedness and donned fig leaves as garments. God recognized their transgression and proclaimed their punishments: for the woman, pain in childbirth and subordination to man, and, for the man, the need to work the ground in toil and sweat for his subsistence.

Their first children were Cain and Abel. Abel, the keeper of sheep, was highly regarded by God and was killed by Cain out of envy. Another son, Seth, was born to replace Abel, and the two human stems, the Cainites and the Sethites, descended from them. Adam and Eve had “other sons and daughters,” and death is said to have come to Adam at the age of 930.

Important works within Judaism that treat the Genesis story include *Genesis Rabbah*. This work states that through Adam’s sin, the perfection of Adam and all creation was lost (*Genesis Rabbah*, 1:2; 12:6). Originally, according to this rendition, Adam and Eve (אָדָם וְחַוָּה) were created upright like the angels (*Genesis Rabbah*, 8:11), as fully developed adults (*Genesis Rabbah*, 14:7), and were created last so as to have dominion over all earlier creation (*Genesis Rabbah*, 19:4). At the time of Adam’s creation some angels anticipated Adam’s love and mercy, while others the falsehood and strife he would bring. The philosopher Philo Judaeus (died circa 45–50CE) said that the two creation narratives told of two distinct Adams, a heavenly Adam created in God’s image and another formed from the dust of the earth. This second Adam, though his mind was in the image of God, succumbed to physical passions by eating the fruit, and subsequently his intellectual capacity degraded.

In Church Christianity’s New Testament, St. Paul sees Adam as forerunner to Jesus (אָדָם), “a type of the one who was to come” (*Romans*, 5:12). As Adam initiated the life of humans upon earth, so Jesus initiates the new human life. Because of the sin of Adam, death came upon all men; because of the righteousness of Jesus, life is given to all men. Thus it was Adam’s sin and not failure to observe the divine law that made the gentiles sinners; therefore, all

people stand in need of the grace of “Christ.” In later Christian theology, this view developed into the concept of Original Sin.

So much of this Judeo-Christian misinformation about Adam and Eve (ﷺ) has seeped into the Islamic body of knowledge that some “Islamic” books are actually saying Adam was an angel. Some “Muslims” are proclaiming that humanity is doomed to live in terminal enmity. There are so-called Islamic traditions that have Adam descending from paradise to Ceylon (Sarandib) and Eve to Jiddah in Arabia; after a separation of 200 years, they are said to meet near Mt. ‘Arafāt and begin conceiving children. The first two sons, Qābīl and Hābīl, each had a twin sister, and each son married his brother’s sister. Later, Shith was born without a sister and became Adam’s favorite and his scion (*waṣīy*). Eve eventually bore 20 sets of twins, and Adam had 40,000 offspring before he died. When they leave the clear meanings of the quotable Qur’an for the vivid imaginations of others, especially people of previous scripture, the Muslims become susceptible to their messy narratives, many of which are now scattered throughout “Islamic” references and historical sources. The Muslims of today, with all the analysis of the Qur’an they now have in front of them, bear the onus of cleaning up all this gobbledygook from their source material, libraries, and bookshelves.

## Beauty Is an Accessory of *Taqwá*

The following lesson, with more of Allah's words of mercy and instructions for salvation, adds a measure of practicality to the previous *āyāt* wherein Adam (ﷺ) realized he was in a conflict position with Satan. The Qur'an is sparse on incidental details, but meticulous in the propagation of principle. Hence, Adam and Eve's ancient trials and errors become moral and legal lessons for man today.

That people find themselves living in societies influenced by Satan more than they are influenced by Allah (ﷻ) is an unavoidable reality of the day. In the time of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the Quraysh had assumed for itself rights and privileges above and beyond the average Arabians who would travel to the Holy Sanctuary in Makkah from time to time. The Ka'bah had become a temple of idols, notwithstanding a religious class that tended to these idols' "needs." Quraysh escaped blame for appropriating these personal privileges and social status because it claimed that the laws governing the Ka'bah and Makkah were taken from divine sources. Thus, in their contrived rationale, their legal system belonged to Allah's *dīn*. With such a social structure and the power they had in the Peninsula, the rest of the Arabians had no choice but to submit to Quraysh's way of looking at things.

This is what happens in any society when there is a class that raises itself above others by rationalizing such rank and status with religious, political, or economic justifications. Quraysh gave itself the title of *Ḥums* along with special advantages, immunity, and benefits that others had no access to. One of these special advantages was the right of Quraysh to circumambulate the Ka'bah (*ṭawāf*) in their own clothes. No one else could do that. Other Arabians visiting the holy city for the purpose of pilgrimage were not allowed to wear used or old clothes. Thus, these Arabians would have to borrow new clothes from the *Ḥums* or purchase new clothes from someone else to perform their *ṭawāf*. Otherwise, they, men and women alike, would have to circumambulate in the nude. The rationale for this practice was based on a claim that this state of "naturalness" can be traced back to scripture.

- (7:26) O children of Adam! Indeed, We have bestowed upon you from on high [the knowledge of making] garments to cover your nakedness, and as a thing of beauty: but the garment of God-consciousness is the best of all. Herein lies a message from Allah, so that man might take it to heart.
- (7:27) O children of Adam! Do not allow Satan to seduce you in the same way as he caused your ancestors to be driven out of the garden: he deprived them of their garment [of God-consciousness] in order to make them aware of their nakedness. Verily, he and his tribe are lying in wait for you where you cannot perceive them! Verily, We have placed [all manner of] satanic forces near to those who do not [truly] commit themselves [to Allah's power].
- (7:28) And [so], whenever they commit a shameful deed, they are wont to say, "We found our forefathers doing it," and, "Allah has enjoined it upon us." Say, "Behold, never does Allah enjoin deeds of abomination. Would you attribute unto Allah something of which you have no knowledge?"
- (7:29) Say, "My Sustainer has [but] enjoined the doing of what is right; and [He desires you to] put your whole being into every act of compliance [to Him], and to call unto Him, sincere in your faith in Him alone. As it was He who brought you into being in the first instance, so also [unto Him] you will return:
- (7:30) "Some [of you] He will have graced with His guidance, whereas for some a straying from the right path will have become unavoidable; for, behold, they will have taken [their own] evil impulses for their masters in preference to Allah, thinking all the while that they have found the right path!"
- (7:31) O children of Adam! Beautify yourselves for every act of reverence, and eat and drink [freely], but do not waste: verily, He does not love the wasteful!
- (7:32) Say, "Who is there to forbid the beauty that Allah has brought forth for His conforming subjects, and the good things from among the means of sustenance?" Say, "They are [lawful] in the life of this world to all who are committed [to

يَبْنِيْٓ ءَادَمَ فَاَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِيَاسًا يُّوْرِي سَوَءَ اَتِكُمْ وَرِيْشًا وَّ لِيَاسَ التَّقْوٰى  
ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ ءَايٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَدْكَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ يَبْنِيْ ءَادَمَ لَا  
يَفْنِدْنَكُمْ الشَّيْطٰنُ كَمَا اَخْرَجَ اَبْوَابَكُمْ مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِيَاسَهُمَا  
لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوَءَ تِهْمًا ۗ اِنَّهُ يَرِيْكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيْلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا  
الشَّيْطٰنَ اَوْلِيَآءَ لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَاِذَا فَعَلُوْا فَحِيْشَةً قَالُوْا وَجَدْنَا  
عَلَيْهَا ءَاِبَاءَنَا وَاَللّٰهُ اَمْرًا بِهَا قُلْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحِيْشَآءِ اَتَقُوْلُوْنَ عَلٰى  
اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قُلْ اَمْرَ رَبِّيْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَاَقِيْمُوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ  
عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَاَدْعُوْهُ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُوْدُوْنَ  
﴿٣٩﴾ فَرِيْقًا هٰدِيْ وَّفَرِيْقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلٰلَةُ ۗ اِنَّهُمْ اَتَّخَذُوْا الشَّيْطٰنَ  
اَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ يَبْنِيْ ءَادَمَ  
خُذُوْا زِيْنَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوْا وَاَشْرَبُوْا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا ۗ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ  
الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِيْنَةَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْ اَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهٖ وَاَلطَّيِّبٰتِ مِنَ  
الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ كَذٰلِكَ  
نُفِصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا  
وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَاَلِآثِمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَاَنْ تُشْرِكُوْا بِاللّٰهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطٰنًا



وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا نَعْمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا  
يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

- Allah] — to be theirs alone on Resurrection Day.” Thus clearly do We spell out these messages to people of knowledge!
- (7:33) Say, “Verily, my Sustainer has forbidden only shameful deeds, be they open or secret, and [every kind of] sinning, and unjustified aggression, and the ascribing of divinity/authority to anyone beside Him — since He has never bestowed any warrant therefor from on high — and the attributing unto Allah of anything at all of which you have no knowledge.”
  - (7:34) And for all people a term has been set: and when [the end of] their term approaches, they can neither delay it by a single moment, nor can they hasten it (al-A'rāf:26-34).

No one gives it much thought, but originally clothing was meant to conceal a person's genitals, then to offer him protection against the elements, and finally for beautification purposes,

O children of Adam! Indeed, We have bestowed upon you from on high [the knowledge of making] garments to cover your nakedness, and as a thing of beauty: but the garment of God-awareness is the best of all. Herein lies a message from Allah, so that man might take it to heart (7:26).

But today, in some parts of the world, there are people who have virtually nothing to wear except one piece of cloth, while

elsewhere there are those few with a wealth of wardrobes that can outfit an entire tribe.

The world of fashion appears to be a natural place for the self-centeredness of Iblīs. In that visually enticing world, there are a dizzying array of options for every kind of person, occasion, or venue.<sup>147</sup> In today's fashion culture, there appears to be a type of social identification with the latest designs or modernistic fads. Gone are the times, if they ever existed for an extended period, when what one wore gave no indication of what class he belonged to. In this materialistic and acquisitive culture that is gripped by class consciousness as a matter of display, what ought to be a means to repel Satan has become an open canvas for him to do as he wills in driving people to "make a statement" with the latest fashion (proximity to the *dunyā*) instead of with their character (proximity to God).

Putting on a new set of clothes should be an act of conformity to Allah, not a tribute paid at the altar of consumerism whose priests double as the barons of Wall Street, Rodeo Drive, and Avenue Montaigne. And so for the committed Muslims to better manage the human tendency of giving in to Satan's corruption, they are advised by the Prophet (ﷺ) to redirect any inkling of self-aggrandizement into gratitude to the Owner and Provider of all, "*I thank Allah for providing me with clothing that improves my image in public and conceals my private parts.*"<sup>148</sup>

In the above statement, Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) is advising the committed Muslims to maintain a heightened consciousness of Allah (ﷻ), especially at those times when they are liable to focus more on themselves (ego) than on Him, thereby opening up a causeway for Satan. Such an attitude is confirmed by the *āyah* in that the mantle of *taqwā* counts much more than the physical garment on the body. A person's heart wrapped in the consciousness of Allah's power presence is much more significant than his body wrapped in fabrics of cotton, wool, polyester, or the like. Had Adam been conscious of Allah's immediate power presence when he and Eve (ﷺ) were contemplating eating from the forbidden tree, they may not have done so.

Some Muslims deduce from the *āyah*, “O children of Adam! We have bestowed upon you from on high [the knowledge of making] garments to cover your nakedness...” that covering the private parts of the human physical body is mandatory. And on this point, the full spectrum of Islamic scholars are agreed. However, where their interpretations vary is in the definition of *‘awrah* (private parts/genitalia). As for the male, the Zāhirī school of thought and al-Ṭabarī say it is inclusive of his penis and buttocks. Mālik ibn Anas says that the navel is not a private part, and that the inner thigh is not included in the definition of *‘awrah* even though it comes close to it. Abū Ḥanīfah says that the knee is included in the definition of *‘awrah*. In the Shāfi‘ī *ijtihād*, both the navel and the knee are not considered to be part of the *‘awrah*, but covering them is preferable. Regarding a female, there is mostly agreement among the Islamic *faqīhs* that her whole body from head to toe is considered *‘awrah* except for her face and hands. Of course this whole subject is one that has plenty of details and other valid Islamic *shar‘ī* views. The interested reader is advised to consult each of these sources individually.

Man should never become self-absorbed to the point of becoming heedless of the fact that Satan’s animosity toward him is ancient and advanced. Satan worked on degrading Adam and Eve (ﷺ); and it happened when they were told to leave the Garden. In the process, the arousal parts of the human anatomy were exposed to both sexes. This all happened through the agency of hostility that exists between man’s inclination to Allah (ﷻ) and Satan’s assault upon it, “Will you, then, take him [Satan] and his cohorts for [your] overlords instead of Me, although they are your foes? How vile an exchange on the evildoers’ part!” (18:50).

The sense in man that is supposed to be vigilant of Satan has been dulled and muted in today’s materialistic and secular societies. Satan and his fiery fraternity are ubiquitous, trying to lead man away from his Merciful and ever-present Sustainer by turning his consciousness toward the satiation of his appetites. Satan and his ilk can see man, but not vice versa; they are beyond man’s visual

perception, **“Certainly, he and his clan can detect you from a position you cannot observe them.”** This means that, by its senses, life made of clay cannot detect life made of fire. The damage coming from an unseen enemy is far greater than that from a visible one. This makes Satan more capable of seduction and sedition and man less capable of confronting him directly. In an “access” sense of the word, humans are at a disadvantage while Satan is not, **“[Satan] who whispers in the hearts of men” (114:5).** Two hadiths provide some more detail about the workings of Satan,

*Satan flows in the descendant of Adam as blood [flows in the body].<sup>149</sup>*

*The angel makes its round and Satan makes his round [into man’s heart]. The angel’s round promises man prosperity and cogency; as for the round of Satan, it promises man iniquity and false belief.<sup>150</sup>*

A review of al-Bukhārī and Muslim reveals that some hadiths indicating the human possibility of sensing the jinn are recorded.

Even though Satan and his affiliates are the allies of God’s deniers who are attuned to his mutterings and murmurings, Satan does not exert coercive or forceful power over humans per se. An *āyah* in the Qur’an says as much,

**And when everything will have been decided [on the Day of Judgement], Satan will say, “Behold, Allah promised you something that was bound to come true! I, too, held out [all manner of] promises to you — but I deceived you. Yet I had no power at all over you: I but called you — and you responded to me (14:22).**

In today’s non-scriptural societies of the world, man has been overwhelmed by a post-modest, post-shy, or perhaps more to the point, an *au naturel* human psychology when it comes to matters of body exposure. The social “morality” peculiar to these crass mate-

rialistic societies, now welcomes women, especially, and men to be seen in various stages of undress in all sorts of public venues. The more a person reveals her/his body the more chic, civilized, and highborn she/he is considered. No one can convince a common-sense person that this denuding of individuals and societies is natural or normal and just came about as a matter of cultural progress and evolution away from the anachronistic strictures of religion. To the contrary, as is the case in all such societies that replace God with “government” or “business,” there is a controlling pressure group (interest) behind the indecent exposure of public life. Who might be benefiting from dehumanizing man? Could the operating systems of Zionism and imperialism have anything to do with it? Is there money to be made by the glamor, fashion, and cosmetics industries? Are there interlocking political and financial interests that find in the “animalization” of humans a quick way to control and manipulate them? That there is a systematic and well-established drive to demoralize and deprave human populations from one corner of the world to the other should not come as a surprise to anyone. The film industry used to churn out millions of miles of reel focusing on the soft-core and hard-core nudity of body and soul; now, with improved technology, it is doing the same with billions of digital frames that come right to one’s desktop. And so why should anybody be shocked when he discovers that the individuals and elites who run the movie industry and cinematic productions are card-carrying members of a coterie of chief executives and prime ministers who manage the institutions of Zionism and imperialism? The beauty of man peaks when he is properly and modestly attired; the beauty of a beast comes out when it is unclothed and “in the wild.”

### Secular Confusion over the Meaning of Obscenity and Morality

There appears to be a relationship between nudity, sexual attraction, and man's yearning for eternity. It was within this triangle that Ādam and Ḥawwā' (ﷺ) were deceived into ignoring Allah's forewarning. The hindsight of this event puts man in a position to reflect on his human nature, his relationship with Allah (ﷻ), and the element of "bad blood" that characterizes Satan's relationship with the descendants of Adam and Eve. The occasion of nudity — the state of being without clothing, covering, or protection of any kind — marked Satan's very first influence over man. This "nudity consciousness" induced Adam and Eve away from Allah toward man's avowed enemy.

This lesson in the Qur'an transports man back to the initial human minute of departure from Allah (ﷻ) and alerts him to the fact that he is currently living out the consequences of that "human failure." Its moral overtones go into what it means to be clothed, to discipline human inclinations, and to avert the war through temptation that Satan imposes on all people who disregard or ignore what Allah says to them for their own benefit and redemption. Allah's words of caution are the fortitude that keeps man from giving in to Satan, institutionalizing his errors, and deviating away from his godly source.

The emotional break from God usually maintains itself within a structure of programs, laws, and traditions that give shelter to the rationale for every departure from God. Satan's temptation is subtle but the fortification of his tactics is savage. The impulse for sin is delicate and insidious but the ensuing culture of nudity and nakedness is cold and brutal. The acculturation of exposed bodies and illicit sexual relationships, whether in the distant past or in the here and now, is beyond question a satanic sedition. All who promote such obscenity and vulgarity are satanic brokers and executors. Satan still works on the ego, he still uses the medium of temptation, and he stealthily detracts from Allah's words and directions. Within this dynamic, Satan can become the superior of those who are not committed to Allah (ﷻ). Without Allah, man can easily be drawn into Satan's scheming,

**“We have rendered the demons to be the overlords of those who do not commit [to Us].”**

But it is divine information that gives man power over Satan and his minions,

**O children of Adam! Do not allow Satan to seduce you in the same way as he caused your ancestors to be driven out of the Garden: he dispossessed them of their apparel to show them their nakedness (7:27).**

There is nothing like the strength of these Qur’anic words that affirm not only the presence but also the influence of Satan over man. He is more than just a supernatural evil agent “thought” to influence human behavior as in the biblical perception of him. In the Judeo-Christian tradition he is the chief of evil spirits or fallen angels, also known as the Devil. The designation *Devil* is a rare term in the Hebrew scriptures (where Satan is more common), but more frequent in the New Testament, where the Devil is sometimes represented as a serpent (Revelation, 12:9) or as a tempter (Matthew, 4:1). In Judeo-Christian literature, the Devil appears in many different guises, human or animal, and with many different names including, but not limited to, Beelzebub, Belial, *ahuras*, and jinn. Exorcism of individuals possessed by demons is long attested in the Judeo-Christian tradition, but cults of devil-worship (or Satanism) involving witchcraft, black magic, and the occult have persisted despite opposition throughout most of Christian history.

Human societies overtly gravitating toward satanic cults of worship is simply the evil one’s endgame. His plan was set into motion long before this inevitable conclusion. Initially, man fell for Satan’s suggestions and deceptions. Then, as man sensed he could get away with “breaking” from Allah (ﷻ), he began to construct his impulsive and impetuous social orders that contravened God’s ordinances. What logically followed was man’s contentment with a society informed by the inferences and deductions of a non-scriptural source. And so, ultimately who, other than this non-scriptural being, would be the object of worship? Thus, human

societies end up with satanic cults as a manifestation or a natural outcome of the absence of God from man's conscience, mind, life, and society.

Those who are committed to Allah (ﷻ) have Him as their *wali* (superior and reference) whereas those who are not will have — knowingly or not — Satan as their *wali*. This is confirmed by how the satanic pack responds, **“And [so], whenever they commit an obscenity, they [as might be expected] say, ‘We found our founding fathers doing it,’ and ‘God has ordered us to do it.’”** That was the discernment of the Arabians at the time the Qur'an was initially being revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ), when they and their women were walking around the Ka'bah naked. They claimed to have inherited this practice from their ancestral forefathers who themselves had encircled the Ka'bah in the nude because God had ordered them to do so.

This Qurayshī/Arabian reference to inherited or ancestral traditions and laws is akin in the Euro-American context to common law, which is a judge-made law that originated in England from decisions shaped according to prevailing custom or judicial precedent. Decisions were reapplied to similar situations and, thus, gradually became common to the nation. Common law forms the basis of legal procedures in American states, except Louisiana, where certain French legal traditions are preserved. There is no American federal common law, since the national government is one of delegated powers; however, federal judges apply state common law in cases involving citizens of different states, where there is no applicable federal statute. A statute overrides common law, but many statutes are based upon the common law and are interpreted according to the common law tradition. In an institutional sense, there is no uniform scriptural basis for common law; however, certain judicial precedents, given that they come from individual judges, may have been influenced by scripture.

Regardless of whether it was Arabia then, or America now, or any other scripture-denying social order in the future, Allah (ﷻ) tells His Prophet (ﷺ) and the followers of prophets to take on and expose these individuals of false morality and elites of false laws.



The fact of the matter is that no statutes or laws can conflict with Allah's laws, especially since His laws are the ones to uphold morality and not abandon it. Therefore, how can there be a "God" behind secular or "religious" laws that facilitate immorality, obscenity, evil, and unprincipled activities designed to stimulate sexual desire? **"Say, 'Certainly, Allah does not command indecency/promiscuity (*fahshā'*); do you attribute to Allah that which you do not know?'"**

Of course, Allah (ﷻ) does not promote vulgarity, nakedness, and unfaithfulness. He does not advance or encourage the *fahshā'*, which is what gives free reign to sensualism. How can anyone attribute such propensity and behavior to the words of God? How can God condone such violations of morality? No source other than the Qur'an and the model of Muhammad (ﷺ) qualifies to proclaim what God says and makes allowances for. And so, at least this much is clear, **"...never does Allah encourage deeds of abomination."**

But once people break from God they regress into their world of explanations and theorizing. They give their societies a veneer of ideology that explains away and excuses the most dishonorable and unbecoming of human behavior. Even today's "modern societies" figure out novel arguments to justify indecent, "extramarital" behavior; and in an attempt to make religion more relevant to social policy, such perfidious behavior is often given a religious gloss.

The phenomenon of pornography represents a pertinent illustration of this mental and social confusion. Pornography is one of the cornerstones of the prostitution or sex "industry." Pornography in a runaway secular society has come to mean *that which deals with sex or sexual activity and appeals to prurient interests or that which is obscene*. In fact, for many people the distinction between obscenity and pornography has become blurred. The meaning of "pornography" today is one that lay people, as well as the courts, have struggled to define — and this is why it is a gray area insofar as public policy is concerned.

The controversies over pornography have waxed and waned in the 20th century, but increasingly since 1975 there have been renewed discussions of this problem for several reasons. One is cer-

tainly the US government's focus on the notion of "family values" and its attitude that pornography is harmful, not only to the family, but to society in general. Another, perhaps more recent, factor deals with the very nature of art itself, with modern and postmodern art as well as with popular culture. The photographs of Robert Maplethorpe and various performance artists, and the recordings of various rock groups and rap singers have been subjected to their share of criticism and, in some cases, legal attention. Finally feminist writings on pornography have vigorously presented still another viewpoint.<sup>151</sup>

During the early years of the 1970s, the battle-lines were clearly drawn. On the one hand were those who felt that pornography represented a real danger to society and, on the other hand, those who maintained either that pornography could not be defined adequately or that government restrictions (on free speech) presented a far greater danger than did pornography.<sup>152</sup>

Those who held that pornography was harmful asserted that the emotional needs of children would be thwarted in a society obsessed with pornography; romantic love would disappear; and sex would be de-personalized and reduced to the mere couplings of animals, thus de-humanizing those who engaged in it. Furthermore, the no-longer sublimated sexual drive — thought to be the source of "creative imagination" — would lead to the disappearance of a great deal of art, and perhaps even halt the progress of civilization. Taking the word *pornography* literally, some saw pornography as a kind of prostitution, since it advertizes and advocates "sex for sale," pleasure for a price. Some said that sexual immorality more than any other causative factor, historically speaking, is the root cause of the demise of all great nations.<sup>153</sup>

Opposing such views were those who held that pornography was offensive but could not be clearly defined, that it had not been shown to produce actual harm and, finally, using a slippery slope argument, that the restriction of so-called pornographic material in a free society was a graver danger than the presence of such material. Finally psychologists and doctors argued that pornography was beneficial: it might aid in normal sexual development and have a pos-

itive effect on those people who might not have access to sexual relationships with a loved one!<sup>154</sup>

In general, then, most of the discussions on pornography concerned whether it could be defined with any kind of clarity and whether it was, in fact, harmful — since harm was considered the only sufficient reason to limit freedom. It soon became clear that in trying to weigh the dangers of restricting freedom against what some saw as the dangers of pornography, it would be necessary to define or describe pornography in relatively precise terms. Various attempts were made in the United States and various distinctions were postulated.<sup>155</sup>

In 1973, Chief Justice Warren Burger of the US Supreme Court rejected the older test, given in *Memoirs v. Massachusetts*, that the definition of pornography should include the calque “utterly without redeeming social value,” a standard which, it might be noted in passing, would let such works as those of the Marquis de Sade, Restif de la Baron and John Cleland slip through the very net that was set to catch them. Instead Justice Burger in *Miller v. California* tried to define pornography by giving three guidelines:

1. whether the “average person” applying contemporary community standards would find the work taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest;
2. whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct; and
3. whether the work taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

Burger notes that to be protected by the First Amendment to the US Constitution (that is, free speech), a *prurient* or *patently offensive* work must have “serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.” Some would point out that it is precisely this value of seriousness that post-modern art has rejected, along with other traditional values.<sup>156</sup>

These guidelines did not solve the problem for it soon became clear that they were not only subjective (for what appeals to the prurient interest of one person might not appeal to the prurient in-

terest of another) but also vague (for what criteria actually determine an “average person”?). Furthermore, who is to judge what is offensive, and whose judgement should be considered in drawing conclusions about the literary or artistic value of various works? One has only to recall some of the books, banned in the past in the US but now considered “classics,” to see how opinions vary. James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* (1934) and *Tropic of Capricorn* (1961), D.H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (1928), Radclyffe Hall’s, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), and so forth, were all banned at one time or another. Consider also the many apparently hastily applied “plaster of Paris leaves” that were once used to cover the marble genitals of innumerable ancient Greek statues in the Vatican museum in order to protect the delicate sensibilities of the visitor.<sup>157</sup>

While discussions about pornography continued into the 1980s and 1990s, and are perhaps even more numerous than in the preceding decade, the nature of the debate has shifted and become more complex. What happened to change the terms of the controversy concerning pornography was the view, supported by a number of feminists, that pornography does, in fact, cause harm — not vague harm to society as was claimed before, but rather harm to one-half of humanity, namely, harm to women.<sup>158</sup>

Many feminists assert that pornography demeans and dehumanizes women by preserving and repeating the ancient and self-serving male myths that women really want to be raped and brutally treated. Pornography depicts women in a distorted fashion: as sexually passive, receiving pleasure from being beaten, whipped or dominated; violence and rape are depicted as amusing, something to brag about, something that women enjoy, no matter what they say. Thus, pornography degrades women by showing them as mere sexual objects — objects whose sole value lies in their ability to please men. Some feminists argue that viewing pornography actually leads to increased male hostility and aggressive attitudes toward women and thus ultimately perhaps to an increase in rape, while other feminists see pornography as simply leading to unhealthy attitudes and stereotypical views of women.<sup>159</sup>

This feminist view of pornography entails new distinctions between, for example, erotica, which might include explicit sexual descriptions but is not harmful, and pornography, which is violent, degrading, or abusive. Some in the mentally challenged and scripture-denying West would say that pornography is not just material that is degrading or abusive to women, but that explicitly represents or describes degrading and abusive sexual behavior so as to endorse and/or recommend such behavior. The contextual features, moreover, that communicate such endorsement are intrinsic to the material: that is, they are features whose removal or alteration would change the representation or description. This would mean that the depiction of a rape, for example may or may not be pornographic; it depends on the context. If a movie were made to explore the consequences of rape it might be a highly moral film, while if the same presentation is given within the context of endorsing this kind of behavior, it is pornographic.<sup>160</sup>

Although many feminists agree that women are unjustly stereotyped and demeaned in at least some pornographic depictions, not all agree about the best tactics to confront pornography, or even about the nature of pornography itself. Some call for censorship on the basis of a correlation between pornography and crimes of violence against women, while others would try to limit the spread of pornography by explaining how pornography exploits women and by trying to convince people not to support it financially. On the other hand, there are feminists who are critical of the anti-pornographic position. They would say that the preoccupation with pornography as a social problem is indicative of New Right politics. The belief that pornography is “the cause” of sexual violence and promiscuity leads to a protectionist stance toward women, which allows the New Right to argue for women’s protection rather than their equality.<sup>161</sup>

In this line of thinking women (and children) are presented as helpless creatures who need to be protected by men. To put this in the context of American society, the Reagan administration used pornography as a political issue to establish a context in which arguments for sexual freedom, sexual equality, and sexual pluralism

would be curtailed. Through the equations of pornography and sex, and sex and violence, the administration attempted to reorient the public discussion of sexual expression away from sex equality and toward sex “difference” in the context of phallocratic (genital) heterosexual sex.<sup>162</sup>

It would follow according to this concept that the equation of pornography, sex, and violence makes it difficult not to negate sex or to consider sex in protective terms. Referring to those anti-pornography feminists who assert that pornography does not give just one message but many, this line of reasoning says: pornography carries many messages other than woman-hating. It advocates sexual adventure, sex outside of marriage, sex for no reason other than pleasure, casual sex, anonymous sex, group sex, voyeuristic sex, illegal sex, and public sex. The point is clear: if pornography does not always involve the victimization of women, then condemning it creates a new problem: the “denial of the freedom to engage in multiple sexual practices.”<sup>163</sup>

It is easy to see that feminist views on pornography are extremely varied and often in disagreement with each other. It is equally clear that the problem of pornography is much more complicated and many-faceted than was once thought. At the very least, the new discussions force some freethinkers to examine many of their most basic personal and social ideas and their underlying assumptions, especially their ideas about freedom and in particular a free society.<sup>164</sup>

From the Qur’anic perspective it is interesting to watch the human mind go into an observational jungle devoid of scriptural insight and knowledge. For example, many essays reduce pornography to loveless sex, likening it to animal couplings. But man’s knowledge, even of animal sexual behavior, is incomplete and rudimentary. Desmond Morris points out in his book *The Naked Ape* (1967) that the human being is the “sexiest animal.” In comparison with humans, most mammals have a much more limited sex life since sexual activity is often restricted to those special periods when the female is receptive, which in some species may be only several weeks a year. Nor do those essayists who write about “ani-

malistic sex” consider such species as swans and geese that mate for life. Indeed, as they learn more about animal behavior they find that, in many cases, it is not as “mechanical” as they once thought. The courtship of many animals is sometimes extended and spectacular. Some scientific discoveries indicate that in many species the female will not accept just any male, but makes a selection.

**“And if they commit a moral crime they say, ‘We found our historical fathers doing so,’ and ‘God instructed us to do so...’”** Something called the “social erosion” of scripture can be observed throughout the course of human history. Scripture, presented pristinely during the lifetime of prophets and apostles, starts to lose its integrity after they pass away because elites and interest groups begin to chip away at and then cut off its vital principles — all of which are justice centered and justice related. Over the course of a few generations, the meanings of justice in God’s revealed word become absent and society becomes “religious” in the “watered down” and subdued manner that is all too familiar. The rituals of religion become the main course of religion, religion itself becomes another “department” of the larger status quo system. And finally, to cap the devolving social transformation, the entrenched class of vested interests comes in and says that indecency and obscene behavior can be traced to God, **“Say, ‘Certainly, Allah does not commend obscenity. Do you attribute to Allah what you do not know?’”**

In the present day, people of scripture are having to face the issue of homosexuality. In the 1960s and 1970s most Euro-American nations decriminalized sexual activity between consenting male adults. That victory for homosexuals ushered in “gay liberation” movements throughout the West. Being invisible, at least compared with women and blacks, gay people had not suffered the same degree of overt discrimination. The main effort of “gay liberation” has been to raise the self-esteem of homosexuals, to eradicate the shame that the culture has taught them to feel, and so banish fears of disclosure.<sup>165</sup>

Whether people should be “outed” (their homosexuality brought to public knowledge) without their consent has divided the movement. Arguments in favor of outing are that the gain in

making known the sexuality of worthy citizens or celebrities outweighs any private distress and that to shy away from it is to admit that homosexuality is shameful. “Gay liberation” also has a number of legislative objectives, among them being the equal recognition in law of married homosexual couples, and equal age of consent with heterosexuals. Below is a rough timeline on the decriminalization of homosexuality:

- 1961 – all nonviolent consensual sex activities between adults in private are decriminalized in 24 US states.
- 1971 – homosexual acts are decriminalized in Austria.
- 1978 – homosexual acts are decriminalized in Spain.  
The age of consent is set at 12.
- 1979 – homosexuality is no longer classified as a disease in Sweden.
- 1981 – law prohibits discrimination against gays and lesbians in Norway.
- 1988 – male homosexual acts are decriminalized in “Israel.” Previously, a ten-year prison sentence had been possible.
- 1989 – in Denmark, legislation allows homosexuals to engage in a “registered partnership,” a status similar to marriage.
- 1992 – homosexual acts in the army are decriminalized in Switzerland.<sup>166</sup>

Without Allah’s compass and grasp the terms and definitions of man’s existence and relationships are left wide open to human interpretations and even rules. Throwing the acknowledgment of the *fāhishah* to the wind, the best human minds can wander about *ad infinitum*, coming up with their “moral philosophies” of the age. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) believed that an action was moral if it could be universalized. Hence, if a person wanted to know whether telling a lie on a particular occasion was justifiable, he should imagine what would happen if everyone lied. He viewed people as rational and autonomous moral agents and argued that a moral act was one that was consistent with the “categorical imperative.” One formulation of this was: always aim to treat humanity, whether in yourself or in others, as an end in and of itself, never merely as a



means. What Kant meant by this is that a person should not be used as a means to another's happiness; if he uses someone as a means to his own ends then he has removed that person's autonomy.<sup>167</sup>

In Britain Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) developed the moral theory known as Utilitarianism. It aimed to give a method of moral judgement based on experience rather than dogma. Bentham thought that an action was good if it increased pleasure, bad if it increased pain. An action or law would be good if it produced the greatest happiness for the greatest number. He developed a “happiness calculus” in order to calculate the consequences of any action or law in terms of pleasure or pain. Using these “principles” he designed a prison called the panopticon where punishment would be measured out according to the amount of pain caused by the offender.<sup>168</sup>

The Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) called Utilitarianism “pig philosophy” as it appeared to base the goal of ethics on the swinish pleasures of the multitude. In light of this criticism, John Stuart Mill refined Bentham's theory by suggesting that there were higher and lower pleasures, and that the higher pleasures were preferable. As he put it, “...better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied.” By lower pleasures, Mill meant pleasures of the flesh; by higher pleasures, pleasures of the intellects. One consequence of Mill's modification was that it was no longer possible to use Bentham's happiness calculus.<sup>169</sup>

For German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), there were two basic types of morality: “master morality” and “slave morality.” By this he meant that moral codes arise from people's social origins. In master morality, the noble is good, and heroism, courage, and individual greatness are emphasized. Slave morality is the morality of the weak. What harms the weak is called “evil,” and what helps them is called “good.” Nietzsche thought that each individual needs to create his own moral system; the point of morality is to allow each person to sublimate and control his passions in order to emphasize the creativity inherent in his being.<sup>170</sup>

The French philosopher and writer Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) was an atheist and believed that individuals have no

objective way of formulating morality. If one follows a moral system or religion, he is acting in “bad faith” by denying that he has the responsibility for determining his own choices. Like Nietzsche, Sartre believed that it is the individual who needs to create his or her own moral code. He thought that individuals should act authentically — that is, make choices based on the understanding that they are responsible for creating themselves.<sup>171</sup>

The above back-and-forth illustrates how the mind runs wild when the “power of the mind” is not constrained to an orbit. The Qur’an, in this instance and with regard to all other core ideas, represents the range and the reach of man’s God-given intellect. And so, for a way out of this mental wilderness, Allah (ﷻ) advises,

**Say, “My Sustainer commends social justice; and [He desires you to] put your whole being into every act of compliance [to Him], and to request Him earnestly, sincere in your faith in Him alone” (7:29).**

This is Allah’s order, in contradistinction to the ways and means of non-scriptural social units and nations. No amount of propaganda or promoting some cause can contravene this fact,

**As it was He who brought you into being in the first instance, so also [unto Him] you will return: some [of you] He will have graced with His guidance, whereas for some a straying from the right path will have become unavoidable — for, behold, they will have taken [their own] satans as their superiors in preference to Allah, thinking all the while that they are ushered [by Allah] (7:29–30).**

The whole journey of human life began with Adam and Eve (ﷺ) on one side and Satan on the other. And this journey will end with the corralling of those committed and faithful Muslims on the side of Adam and Eve as well as the corralling of the perverted and contrarian humans on the side of Satan. The latter will fuel the pits

of the infernal regions, as they were the allies and subordinates of Satan, thinking all the while that they were guided and that they were right.

The following seven points synthesize the main deterrent examples covered by *āyāt* 7:27–30:

1. Inherited traditions and ancestral customs are not binding on committed Muslims, who are required to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong in light of Allah's written word and practical prophet.
2. Allah (ﷻ) expects social justice in human societies; He does not condone immorality, obscenity, or noncompliance.
3. A committed Muslim conforms to Allah (ﷻ) when his movements and labor in life adjust to Allah's moral standards and legal criteria.
4. The resurrection of life is akin to the genesis of life, **“And He it is who creates [all life] in the first instance, and then brings it forth anew: and most easy is this for Him...” (30:27).**
5. Allah (ﷻ) commends and commands social and institutionalized justice (*qisṭ*). Pornography, homosexuality, and other forms of sexual perversion are an offense and a ravishment of social justice.
6. People at the time of their creation and birth are prone to adherence and compliance with Allah (ﷻ), but then intervening and interfering factors cause some individuals and societies to break from Him.
7. Allah (ﷻ) is the superior source of influence over those committed and loyal to Him, while those in denial of Him have Satan as their predominate higher-up.

### The Reference Point for Attire, Modesty, and Beauty

In the pre-Islamic Arabian world of traditions and culture, a woman performing Hajj or ‘Umrah would walk around the Ka‘bah essentially naked, with nothing but a small loincloth, saying the verse of poetry, “Today some of it [genitals] appears or all of it and whatever of it appears I do not consent to [for proposition].” In this context the following *āyāt* were revealed,

**O children of Adam! Beautify yourselves for every act of reverence, and eat and drink [freely], but not in excess: verily, He does not love the extravagant! Say, “Who is there to forbid the beauty that Allah has brought forth for His creatures, and the good things from among the means of sustenance?” Say, “They are [well-ordered] in the life of this world for all who are committed [to Allah] — to be theirs alone on Resurrection Day.” Thus clearly do We spell out these illustrations to people of knowledge! (7:31–32).**<sup>172</sup>

From another disclosure of the well-established, pre-Islamic code of conduct during the Hajj and ‘Umrah, the Arabians would go around the Ka‘bah naked except for the *Ḥums*, that is, the Quraysh and its offspring. These others would have to be unclothed unless the *Ḥums* would give them of their own clothes — men giving men, and women giving women. The *Ḥums* were also excluded from the exit at al-Muzdalifah,<sup>173</sup> while people were standing at ‘Arafāt.<sup>174</sup> This tradition or inherited pattern of thought and action was the norm until the advent of Muhammad (ﷺ) and Islam when the above *āyāt* were revealed. On that occasion, one of the Prophet’s companions announced, “No naked person shall walk around the [inviolable] House.”<sup>175</sup>

It has also been narrated that pre-Islamic generations would only eat the bare minimum, and nothing with “high calories” during the time of Hajj. That was the Arabian way of expressing its glorification or idealization of the Hajj. Noting this, the Muslims said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “But we are more entitled to that than they

are.” But the *āyah*, “...and eat and drink [freely] but not in excess...” settled the issue.<sup>176</sup>

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās narrated that tribal Arabian people in the pre-Islamic times of *jāhiliyah* would walk around the Ka‘bah naked — men during daylight and women during the night. Once they arrived at the *masjid* in Miná they would also take off their clothes before entering. In support of this tradition, they would say, “We do not walk around the Ka‘bah in clothes that were worn while we committed worldly acts of sin.”<sup>177</sup> And so, the *āyah*, “**O children of Adam! Beautify yourselves for every act of reverence...**” was revealed. This means that the expression of beauty comes through clothing the body — at the very least, the private parts, or *‘awrah* — not exposing it.

The primary purpose for clothing in Islamic society is to maintain the privacy of the *‘awrah* and the resplendence of the body. Another purpose for clothing is to provide protection from the weather, from hazardous working conditions, etc. The heavy fur-lined Inuit parka protects against the cold, just as the long cloth-draped headdresses worn by certain desert peoples protect against the wind and sun. Gloves and mittens guard against frostbite. Shoes, whether boots, moccasins, or sandals, protect the feet.

But clothing serves other functions too. Most articles of clothing are ornamental, even when they are intended to protect against the weather. Buttons, sashes, pleats, beads, and embroidery are added because they are pleasing to the eye in some cultures. In others, decorative accessories add interest to clothing; rings, collars, pendants, belts, bracelets, bows, and headbands are worn for extra ornamentation. Among the American Plains Indians, fringes and beads decorated buckskin shirts. In New Guinea, the Ipili-Paiyala adorn their belts, aprons, and wigs with bright straw flowers and parakeet feathers.<sup>178</sup>

Sometimes it is the body itself that is decorated. Once many Polynesians tattooed themselves from head to toe and, in Japan, Ainu women tattooed their lips. In Australia, tribal aborigines make permanent designs on their bodies by cutting the skin with a sharp knife, then rubbing dirt or soot into the wound to raise a large

and impressive scar. Some Indonesians file their teeth into sharp points. In some cultures, head hair serves as adornment. Among the Swazi of South Africa, warriors bleach their hair. Among the Masai, intricately styled hairdos are popular for women. Elsewhere in the world, hair is cut, shaved, dyed, waved, straightened, curled, or plucked. Fingernails and toenails are filed, trimmed, colored, or lacquered. Skin is painted or dyed. Ears and noses are pierced. And faces are painted.<sup>179</sup>

In many societies, clothing indicates social, political, occupational, or economic status. In Euro-American culture, certain uniforms tell us whether the wearer is a nurse, policeman, soldier, or mailman. Stripes, bars, stars, and ribbons indicate the rank of a serviceman. Mink coats and diamonds are symbols of wealth. And brides can be recognized by their wedding garments the world over. Among the Aztecs of ancient Mexico, only the members of the rich upper classes were permitted to wear feather-decorated garments. In pre-Columbian Peru, only the ruling Inca and members of his family could wear ornamental earplugs. Sometimes clothing indicates place of residence. In many parts of Central and South America, inhabitants of each village wear clothes made of cloth woven in a unique design.<sup>180</sup>

In some cultures clothing is worn also to hide certain parts of the body. But standards of modesty vary greatly from group to group. Among the Baganda of East Africa, clothes are designed to cover the entire body. Conversely, the Witoto of South America wear nothing at all except narrow belts about their waists. So what does it mean to be modest? Or immodest? In a world without Allah's advice and guidance, it all depends on where you live.<sup>181</sup>

Standards of modesty have not been constant over time. Imagine, for example, what our grandmothers would have said about the modern carefree styles and freewheeling fashions in vogue today. But people everywhere are insistent that currently accepted cultural criteria be observed. Early in 1971, Karamojong tribesmen of Uganda made world headlines by beating up their chief when he suggested that they begin to wear clothes. Without God-given standards clothing that is "proper" at one time and

place may not be proper at another time and place. The skimpy bathing suits that are a common feature at the beach would hardly seem appropriate at school or church.<sup>182</sup>

Standards of beauty differ, too, among different groups of people. American women starve themselves on fad diets in order to maintain figures that are fashionably slender. And American men exercise strenuously in an attempt to keep their waistlines trim. But many peoples find thinness quite unattractive. Natives of the tiny island of Tonga in the Pacific are proud that their king weighs more than 300 pounds. They would be ashamed of him if he weighed less. In ancient Hawaii, kings and queens demanded that their servants knead (massage) their royal stomachs between meals so that they might be able to eat “just a little more.” It was an attempt to gain yet more weight. And among certain African tribes, leaders are expected to be heavyset.<sup>183</sup>

In the United States, people do all they can to see that their teeth are straight and their eyes properly aligned. But among the Mayas of pre-Columbian Central America, crossed eyes were considered to be marks of great beauty and distinction. Mayan children wore small balls of wax from their forelocks; as the ball would swing slowly back and forth before their eyes, the eyes focused on it. Eventually, the child proudly boasted crossed eyes.<sup>184</sup>

What is “beautiful”? What clothing is “proper”? What sort of house is “suitable”? What ways of living are “best”? Man cannot judge. This issue needs guidelines from a higher authority — an authority that is impartial, transcultural, and class-free.

Just as no particular human race is superior to others, no human culture is better than any other. Some societies are more advanced technologically. But it cannot be said that life in those societies is better. The “right” ways are those that make life peaceful and equally accessible for the people who practice them. So long as members of a human group can obtain food, shelter, and space — and so long as they can coexist with each other — their accepted practices and life-ways are suitable for them. All this can be achieved when there is a social order of justice. But such an order can only be possible when man learns what Allah (ﷻ) is telling

him. Only the Islamic culture can provide an immutable point of reference for appropriate attire, modesty, and beauty.

### **And Eat and Drink, but Not to Excess...**

In this *āyah*, **“O children of Adam! Beautify yourselves for every act of reverence, and eat and drink [freely], but not in excess: verily, He does not love the extravagant!”** there is a pairing of dressing and eating, but the caveat is to dress and eat without extravagance or foolhardiness. In the opinion of this writer, the wording of this *āyah* pertaining to **“...and eat and drink but do not overdo it...”** is so important that it requires an extensive and detailed explanation.

Food supplies man with the physical and mental energy that enables him to accomplish his goals. Yet it can also work against him — even an organic, whole-food diet. How can good food, which is known to enhance health, be bad? One of the more energy-demanding metabolic processes in the human body is the manufacturing of hydrochloric acid in the stomach, a secretion necessary for the initial step of protein digestion as well as eventual mineral absorption. If the stomach cells that manufacture hydrochloric acid are under constant or excessive demand to perform their function, they will be forced to draw from energy reserves. This energy drain can extend over long periods of time and result in the accumulation of a deficit. Then the individual will feel tired — not just immediately after a meal, but throughout the day and on a regular basis. Simply put, when one part of the body is forced to do extra work, it will steal energy from wherever it can find it. In this way, overeating can sap vitality.<sup>185</sup>

Eventually, the functioning of an overworked digestive system will deteriorate, leading to both diminished nutrient assimilation and bowel and liver toxicity. The far-reaching effects of nutrient deficiencies and the seriousness of a bowel/liver toxic condition is now well-known. In addition, excessive calories have been linked to several cancers, notably of the bowel, and to a generally shortened lifespan. Obesity is certainly not the least consequence



of excessive calories. There are also the resultant risks of high blood pressure, diabetes, elevated cholesterol levels, heart attack, stroke, cancers, and numerous musculo-skeletal difficulties.<sup>186</sup>

By committing to a whole-food and therefore nutrient-rich diet, one of the more common causes of overeating — the impulse itself — can be eliminated. The body's need for nutrients will be fully satisfied, while the fiber in whole foods will force one to chew thoroughly, eat more slowly, and thus become satiated with fewer calories. Fiber-rich foods generally feel more filling.<sup>187</sup>

Overeating is commonly triggered by dietary imbalances other than those involving nutrient quantities. A diet that is too acidic or too alkaline, too expansive or too contractive, can bring on maddening cravings. How many of us eat because we are bored, angry, depressed, lonely, excited, nervous, or anxious? Many of us would do well to sit quietly and reflect several minutes before each meal. Doing this may bring to the surface the thoughts, feelings, and anxieties that can often unconsciously trigger overeating or bingeing. Food is a powerful tranquilizer and sedative. Some individuals find that conquering their overeating requires a major effort in the areas of psycho-emotional balance and personal growth.

**“And eat and drink but not in excess...”** How often have individuals suffered and how much trouble have their societies had to endure due to eating disorders that arise from the violation of this dietary law from Allah (ﷻ). Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and compulsive overeating, are a class of psycho-physiological diseases based upon obsessive behavior related to eating. Eating disorders affect people from all socio-economic classes and ages range from 12–60. Although both men and women can develop eating disorders, predominantly women are affected.<sup>188</sup>

Though factors vary among individuals, the cycle of eating disorders seems to be initiated by psychological injury, including physical and psychological abuse among family members, reduced self-esteem, oppression, social isolation and nutritional dereliction, including faulty diet, abuse of drugs, alcohol and medications, and food intolerance. The resulting behavioral changes and altered eating can lead to a cycle of altered diet, altered appetite, and hunger

mechanisms worsened by nutritional imbalances, leading to further eating changes and compulsive behavior.<sup>189</sup>

Anorexia nervosa, self-induced starvation out of an intense fear of becoming obese, was first described in Western medicine over 100 years ago. It now occurs in an estimated 1% of American women. Although there is a suggestion of genetic predisposition, social factors are probably more important as key determinants in the occurrence of anorexia nervosa. Symptoms include a markedly distorted body image and self-restricted dieting, leading to extreme weakness, muscle wasting and loss of 25% of original body weight, and cessation of menstruation. Anorexia nervosa is potentially life-threatening.<sup>190</sup>

Bulimia nervosa is characterized by recurring episodes of binge-eating (rapid, excessive eating), followed by purging. Most bulimics are women. Bulimia was first described in the United States in 1980 and the incidence in America is increasing. It is characterized by frequent attempts to lose weight by severely restricted diets, followed by episodes of bingeing, followed by deliberate vomiting or abuse of diuretics or laxatives. Bulimics generally possess low self-esteem and fear an inability to stop eating. Frequent fluctuations in body weight are common.<sup>191</sup>

The third category is compulsive overeating, which refers to episodes of excessive overeating or bingeing in secret. Compulsive overeating is accompanied by repeated attempts to lose weight and diet. The increased occurrence of compulsive overeating among American teenagers parallels their increased prevalence of obesity. Compulsive overeating can substitute for confronting life issues and dealing with emotions and their sources.<sup>192</sup>

Hazards associated with eating disorders other than obesity include starvation, electrolyte and fluid imbalances, liver damage, kidney damage, stroke, cessation of menstruation, diabetes, internal bleeding, and ultimately death. Eating disorders are complex conditions that profoundly affect health, and therapy entails multiple approaches including psychological counseling, support groups, nutrition counseling and, in extreme cases, medical intervention. Strategies that focus on weight reduction or diet modification

alone are of limited effectiveness in treating eating disorders because they fail to resolve underlying psychological issues. The most comprehensive treatment programs address emotional, social, physical, and spiritual components.<sup>193</sup>

**“And eat and drink and do not indulge...”** In a complementary take on this *āyah*, an obedient Muslim should be in control of his appetite, which is the learned desire to eat, often a specific food, for taste and enjoyment. Appetite is a pleasant feeling based on previous experiences with foods. It can be triggered by association with aromas, meal times, memories, and certain food advertisements. By contrast, hunger relates to the innate need to eat and is associated with an unpleasant sensation coupled with a physiological need. A variety of foods may satisfy hunger.<sup>194</sup>

Appetite is determined by many factors, including social influences (religion, philosophy, cultural taboos); taste and palatability; state of health (diabetes, cancer); effect of medications; preferences and aversions learned by experience; environmental factors such as climate; and metabolic factors (hormone levels, caloric requirements). The physiological basis of appetite and hunger is not well understood. The hypothalamus of the brain seems to be the interpretative center and clearing house for hunger signals. Anxiety, stress, and psychological disturbances may cause the release of appetite-stimulating chemical signals from different regions of the brain.<sup>195</sup>

Multiple chemical messengers including as many as 25 neuropeptides affect food intake. Neuropeptide Y is a brain protein that induces laboratory animals to consume more fat and carbohydrate. It is produced by the hypothalamus and other regions of the brain. The levels of neuropeptide Y are modulated by hormones and by blood glucose levels. Another brain protein called galanin stimulates an appetite for fat. Cholecystikinin, a gut protein hormone that is also produced in the brain, is believed to stimulate feeding behavior as well.<sup>196</sup>

After beginning an exercise program, appetite may increase during the first few weeks and then return to normal, while moderate exercise (15 miles/wk of jogging or walking) may suppress

appetite. Research suggests that exercise increases the intake of calories by normal-weight men by an average of 200 calories, even when they burn an additional 600 calories. On the other hand, exercise does not seem to increase normal-weight women's caloric intake above the levels needed to make up for those burned by exercising. Regular exercise may not increase appetite or excessive eating in overweight women.<sup>197</sup>

In the prescription-drug-first societies of the secular West a variety of drugs and plant products are used to curb appetite. Phenylpropanolamine is the major ingredient of non-prescription diet pills. This drug temporarily curbs appetite but can cause important side effects. Individuals with any combination of diabetes, kidney disease, thyroid disease, depression, and high blood pressure should avoid phenylpropanolamine. Amphetamines (Dexedrine, Benzedrine) are prescription drugs used to temporarily curb appetite, although appetite generally returns within two weeks. Bulking agents are forms of plant fiber that swell in water, filling the stomach and creating satiety. Psyllium, guar gum, and glucomannan fall into this category. These bulking agents are often included in protein powders used in weight loss protocols to help satisfy hunger. Serotonin and endorphin levels in the brain induce a sense of well-being, and a new generation of appetite suppressants based on new discoveries has been designed or is on the drawing board. For example, dexfenfluramine has been designed to increase the levels of serotonin in the brain. This drug was recently approved by the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA), although it remains controversial. By FDA standards, the effects on weight reduction are modest and there are potential side effects. Prozac, another drug that alters brain serotonin levels, can cause mood imbalances and there is a concern that dexfenfluramine may similarly affect mood.<sup>198</sup>

**“And eat and drink and do not splurge...”** Societies disavowing God, prophets, and scriptures discover that they have a health problem. And one way to adjust this health problem, according to their own best knowledge, is dieting — restricting food intake not to obey God but to control weight. Dieting is a major preoccupation

in the United States where the term implies changing one's physical appearance to fit society's image of beauty. This raises issues of high expectation, self-esteem, sacrifice, guilt, and denial of underlying emotional problems. At any given time an estimated one out of every six Americans is dieting to lose weight. A 1994 *Family Circle* nutrition report found that 40% of women and 25% of men were dieting to lose weight on any given day. Some studies show that as many as four out of five preadolescent girls believe being thin is attractive and are eating to lose weight, and that girls as young as 10 years of age are dieting. This attitude may explain in part the modern epidemic of bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa in young women.<sup>199</sup>

Women's metabolism generally seems to run slower than men's by an average of 50 calories daily. This means that compared to men they burn fewer calories. In addition, women's bodies have higher levels of enzymes for storing fat, and lower levels of enzymes for burning fat. Presumably, these differences in metabolism favor childbearing and fetal development.<sup>200</sup>

General studies provide clues as to why diets frequently fail, leading to psychological and emotional anxiety,

1. Often the dieter's eating habits did not change while undergoing the dieting program; without changing eating patterns the weight lost in a dieting program returns as soon as the dieter resumes usual eating patterns.
2. Many obese people underreport the amount of food they consume; careful analysis of caloric intake and fat deposition reveals that they may eat more than normal-weight people.
3. Starvation or semi-starvation is not a successful weight loss strategy. Drastically reducing food intake promotes a loss of 5 lb/wk, but it represents mainly water loss, not fat loss, and the body regains the water immediately when the diet ends. Losing more than 2 lb/wk, unsupervised, is not recommended because consuming fewer than 1,000 cal/day throws the body's physiology into a defensive mode for starvation. The Basal Metabolic Rate slows down to use fewer calories more efficiently. The body tends to retain the same amount of fat to gain more

weight later. Furthermore, starvation diets are too low in essential nutrients like vitamins and minerals, and chronic dieting can lead to serious health problems and malnutrition.

4. Often dietary goals are unrealistic and set up the person for failure; people who keep weight off tend to do it for their own satisfaction, rather than for an external expectation or pressure.
5. In yo-yo dieting (a cycle of on-again, off-again dieting) the body can adapt to periods of low calorie intake by increasing its energy efficiently, although the effect on metabolism is not firmly established. Some people find it easier to gain weight and harder to lose it, even without overeating. Negative psychological effects of yo-yo dieting include negative body image, problems with interpersonal relationships and depression.
6. Some obese people cannot make permanent reductions in weight, even with severely restricted diets, without emotional repercussions. Researchers have proposed that certain obese people have an altered metabolism. Obesity may be locked into the number of an individual's fat cells, because children tend to follow the body build and fat cell distribution of their parents. Formerly obese individuals tend to store dietary fat as body fat rather than burning it. Recent research on animals has demonstrated the presence of a hormone, leptin, produced by fat cells that affects the appetite center in the brain in increasing satiety so as to curtail eating. In humans, obesity seems to be linked more frequently to the decreased sensitivity of the brain to leptin than to the inability to produce leptin. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that a single substance will treat obesity. Genes that are involved in weight control act together with diet and exercise, and probably no drug will substitute for either.
7. The lack of physical exercise is perhaps the most important factor in regaining lost fat. Exercise temporarily increases the body's metabolic rate even at rest, and it helps maintain lean body weight when dieting. It also seems to increase the sensitivity of the appetite control center, which tends to be blunted by a sedentary lifestyle.

8. Overweight people tend to prefer the taste of fattier food, and people who gain weight often eat high-fat foods like chips, fatty meats, fried foods, cheese, and ice cream. Calories from fat are converted to body fat with a cost of 3% of calories. By comparison, 25% of calories from starch (grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits) are burned in their conversion to fat.<sup>201</sup>

**“And eat and drink and do not engorge...”** How many problems pertaining to overeating, dieting, appetite, and cravings can man overcome if he just listens to and obeys Allah (ﷻ) when He tells him to balance his eating habits, control his appetite, and diminish his cravings. Allah does not condone individuals and societies eating excessively and drinking exuberantly. In this context there is a hadith, *“Eat of what you desire, drink of what you desire, and dress as you desire — so long as you eschew two [unbecoming] characteristics: extravagance and showing off.”*<sup>202</sup>

Of course, “eating of everything” excludes the *ḥarām* that was covered in previous volumes: the meat of dead animals, blood, pork, and meat slaughtered by invoking the name of anyone besides Allah (ﷻ). And similarly, “drinking of anything” does not include alcoholic beverages, intoxicants, poisonous liquids, etc. Finally, the “wearing of everything” applies to all fabrics other than pure silk for men; this is prohibited, except in extraordinary and intruding circumstances. Also *ḥarām*, in forbidding a form of *isrāf* (extravagance), is eating or drinking out of gold or silver containers, or with gold or silver utensils.<sup>203</sup>

**“Say, ‘Who is there to forbid the beauty Allah has effected for His creatures, and the wholesomeness of provisions?’”** Beauty is defined in these *āyāt* through the medium of garb and attire. Beauty is not defined, like in animalistic and materialistic societies, as indecency and exhibitionism. The wholesomeness of victuals and nourishment is only appropriate to a disciplined approach in accessing this subsistence and nutriment; however, the same wholesomeness becomes a disease in self-indulgent and gluttonous, worldly-minded societies. This standard of eating and dressing applies to committed Muslims in earthly life, provided

they have trust in this criterion. Granted, there may be other people(s) who adhere to this standard through a commitment gained by virtue of their own reflection, and they may not publicly declare it to be Islamic; however, on the Day of Resurrection this exclusive right of committed Muslims shall prevail, **“Say, ‘They are [lawful] in the life of this world to all who comply [with Allah] — to be theirs alone on Resurrection Day.’”**

Allah’s food and dress standards may have been obfuscated in this world, but on the Day of Resurrection the record will be set straight, **“Thus clearly do We spell out these messages for people of knowledge!”** Allah (ﷻ) has never barred people from a modest “style” to beauty of body and dress, nor from a disciplined approach to physical health and aesthetic appearance. He has only prohibited them, for their own benefit, from lewd and offensive exposure, and from smutty and steamy behavior in their personal and public lives.

### Modalities of the Non-Scriptural Culture

**Say, “Of course, My Sustainer has forbidden only shameful deeds, be they open or secret, and [every kind of] sinning and unjustified aggression, and the ascribing of divinity/authority to anyone beside Him — since He has never bestowed any warrant therefor from on high — and the attributing unto Allah of anything at all of which you have no knowledge” (7:33).**

All human actions or endeavors that trespass Allah’s red lines are prohibited — be they apparent or otherwise, expressed or connotative, explicit or implicit. Human activities and efforts that fall outside of Allah’s laws of nature and rule of society are called *fawāḥish* (flagrant offenses). Also prohibited is contemptibility and nefariousness (*ithm*), as is transgression and unjustified acts of assault. All these are forms of injustice that run contrary to the truth and fairness. The worst of all this is the human psychology that demotes the authority of Allah (ﷻ), promotes another authority in its



stead, and thereby becomes guilty of *shirk* when this attitude is translated into policies, politics, military invasions of countries, and colonial occupations of continents. This is what happens when the authority of God over man is deflated, and compensated for by overinflating God's divinity. In the process, human life in all its dimensions suffers from the myriad of problems that extend from imbalances in nature to social instabilities in society. An unfortunate characteristic of the undisciplined human nature is the obliviousness that chaperones stony-hearted arrogance; this is what gives man thechutzpah to attribute to Allah what He did not say and then carry on as if nothing happened.

Society, tradition, and the maintainers of the status quo have enough influence to push the notion that Muslims are “crazy” when the latter are ready to “throw down” to honor the Qur'anic standard. This is actually what happened when the early Muslims around Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) began walking around the Ka'bah with their clothes on. They were mocked and ridiculed as tradition, culture, and mainstream society had people going around the Ka'bah either virtually or completely naked. In this atmosphere the clothed Muslims seemed odd, weird, and out of line, while the naked *mushriks* appeared to be “normal,” customary, fashionable, and in vogue.

Culture is the sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. Non-scriptural people are attuned to their culture just as scriptural people are conditioned to theirs. Culture is transmitted through language, material objects, rituals, institutions, and art from one generation to the next. Anthropologists consider the requirements for culture (language use, tool making, and conscious regulation of sex) as essential features that distinguish human beings from animals. Culture also refers to refined music, art, and literature; one who is well versed in these subjects is considered “cultured.”

The Islamic culture is characterized, first and foremost, by complete acquiescence to Allah (ﷻ), unqualified adherence to Him, and power reliance upon Him alone. This Islamic culture preserves human nature in its God-given condition and state of being.

If society at some point diverges from Allah, gaining its own culture that gives way to interpersonal deterioration and chaotic sex relations, then it is this Islamic culture that reconstitutes and reintegrates the human being, his nature, and his disposition. For the prevalent *jāhili* culture to do an about face and return to its original, creative state of being, the committed Muslims have a considerable amount of work in front of them.

Non-scriptural cultures and societies once firmly established and institutionalized possess the power and wherewithal to tamper with human nature, alter human taste, reconfigure human concepts, distort human values, and wreak havoc on human civility. Regardless of what rationalizations one might come up with, a *jāhiliyah* is a *jāhiliyah*. The *jāhiliyah* of 1,000 years past or even 10,000 years would be akin to the *jāhiliyah* today or thousands of years into the future; it does not matter what the technological or modernistic details of that *jāhiliyah* are — once it has stepped out of scripture and charted a course for itself by itself in disregard to Allah (ﷻ), it is in essence and in outlook a *jāhiliyah*. The Arabians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Persian, the Egyptians all had their high society, upper class, and superpower cultures of *jāhiliyah*. Despite the variety of languages, colors, and races of the peoples in such “civilizations,” they all had one thing in common: all-consuming injustice was prevalent because Allah (ﷻ) was not their everyday and ultimate authority.

Is the “high culture” of today’s predominant *jāhiliyah* the exposure of the human body and the nudity of the attractive sex? Any social consciousness of Allah’s worldly power presence is absent, at least from the domains that reverberate with influence. People in this *jāhiliyah*, having no modesty or humility, nonetheless characterize their modernity as one of evolution, progress, and civility. The emperor with no clothes on cannot see that the human nature Allah (ﷻ) endowed man with has been mangled, mutilated, misrepresented, distorted, and defaced. No amount of Hollywood cosmetics can “makeup” the ugliness of this *jāhili* human being. What should concern the Qur’anic reader more than anything else is that there is a comfortable relationship between the elites who took away Allah as authority and His laws as the law of the land on the

one hand, and the consumers of nudity and its offshoots on the other hand. Everyone acculturated as such is wrapped up in satisfying his carnal instincts and accelerating his sex drive, completely unconscious of the money-making and profit-generating business class that runs these types of cultures and societies through extortion for satiation.

The decision-making and authority-grabbing elites have given their culture of sex addiction a sophisticated gloss. The ideas of Sigmund Freud have become the touchstones of modern times. His “discovery” that man has an unconscious (subconscious) mind capable of influencing his conscious behavior “revolutionized” the way people perceive themselves and others. Many of his expressions — *Freudian slips* (mistakes in speech or action that reveal unconscious thoughts), *Oedipal tendencies*, *penis envy*, *the ego and the id*, *repression*, and *sublimation* — have entered common parlance, even if people are not always quite sure of what they mean. And while Freud’s obsession with sexual matters might seem misguided, it made him an unwitting prophet of a permissive society, that social explosion of the 1960s, which continues to resonate today.<sup>204</sup>

Following in the wake of Freud was Carl Gustav Jung, who created his own set of principles, encapsulated in the term *analytical psychology*. Jung’s premise was that conflicting inner drives hinder man’s ability to reach an instinctive goal of personal wholeness. Jungian therapy aims to set up communication between the conscious and unconscious minds. Once they are in touch, they can work together. Jung’s emphasis on self-development and his personal fascination with religion and myth, which lent a mystical cast to his thinking, led to his posthumous adoption as a guru of the “New Age.” From 1907–1913, Freud and Jung collaborated closely — with Freud firmly in the role of mentor. When Jung dared to disagree with him about the primacy of sexuality in the human psyche, Freud saw this as a betrayal, and never forgave the younger man.<sup>205</sup>

The intellectual veneer of this modern *jāhiliyah* has brewed up the concept of the *libido*. When a newborn child takes its first gulp of air, it is acting in accordance with the demands of the libido, or life force — that is, the overriding drive to survive. Insofar as that

baby's ultimate aim is to reproduce the species, this instinctive energy is closely related to sexuality, hence the use of the word in common parlance to denote an individual's sex drive. Freud's view was that the libido manifested itself in a series of different stages. In the first year or so of life, infants exclusively find physical gratification via the mouth, whether by suckling at the breast, sucking the thumb, or eating dirt. The focus then moves to the anus, as children learn to control their bowels, and then (from the age of three or so) becomes "phallic" — centered on their own penis or clitoris. With adulthood, the libido focuses on another person in a mature ("genital") sexual relationship. Jung emphasized the creativity of the libido, which he believed was capable of expression through religion, work, or other interests, as well as in sex. Freud thought that the libido is counterbalanced by a death instinct, responsible for human aggression and all destructive behavior. He said that the history of civilization was the story of the struggle between these conflicting drives.<sup>206</sup>

Jung's studies of dreams and of world mythology revealed a set of characters and situations that recur across cultures, and throughout history. These images also appeared in the dreams and inner thoughts of Jung's patients — primordial images derived from the collective unconscious. For example, the Greek goddess Demeter, the Hindu Parvati, and the ancient Egyptian Isis all represent an ideal (or archetype) of fecund (conceptive) womanhood, which Jung called "the Mother." Other archetypes can be defined by their situation: the story of Hercules faced with the 12 labors is a clear invocation of the Hero archetype, but then so, too, is a dream of struggling to complete a crossword. Wherever there is a challenge to overcome, the Hero is involved.<sup>207</sup>

Two especially significant archetypes are derived from each individual's experience of the opposite sex. The animus represents the "man-as-such," the essential image of maleness; the anima is its female counterpart, the "woman-as-such." Romantic love is the man's quest for his anima (as personified by a lover) and the woman's for her animus. Archetypes also appear in the form of symbols and numbers. Thus, the circle or mandala symbolizes wholeness,

and the swastika, an ancient Indian symbol, dynamism and energy. The appearance in dreams of all such symbols should, said Jung, be carefully monitored as a sign of progress toward individuation (the process of distinguishing from others of the same kind).<sup>208</sup>

Freud's major innovation in treatment techniques remains at the core of modern psychiatry. While the analyst listens, the patient speaks a series of words or ideas as they come to mind, without intervention or censorship. This method, known as *association*, is intended to let patients approach anxieties gradually, liberating them from the task of consciously constructing an account of their problem. Two main techniques are employed. In *free association* (favored by Freudian psychoanalysis), the patient treats each new association as a stepping stone to the next one. So, for example, the chain of ideas "sun...moon...lake...fish...swimming...vacation...beach" might lead to fond memories of childhood friendships formed on vacation, and then to more personal matters such as first love, early sexual experience, or family tensions. Jungian psychotherapists believe that this "chain" of ideas takes the person being analyzed too far from the original thought, and prefer to use *direct association*. In this method, the patient returns to the initial thought, generating a web of associations. Hence "ivy...climbing...ivy...brickwork...ivy...cemetery" and so on might bring to light feelings of sorrow that need to be laid to rest.<sup>209</sup>

The current *jāhiliyah* has academically developed and intellectually expanded the initial Iblīsī rationale. Terms such as *introversion* and *extroversion*, *individuation*, *individual psychology*, *behaviorism*, and *cognitive psychology* are all part and parcel of how sophisticated and complex this *jāhiliyah* has become,

1. *introversion* and *extroversion* – whether someone is an extrovert or an introvert depends on how he directs his libido, or life force. The extrovert's attention is devoted to other people, producing an outgoing personality that enjoys company and likes to share life with others — albeit on an often superficial level. Introverts are more solitary and self-reliant, often looking inward to the world of the unconscious. Their friendships are probably fewer, but deeper.

These concepts are at the heart of Jung's pioneering work on classifying personality types. He went on to identify further sets of polarities — for example, one might be a “thinker” or a “feeler” — but the model of introvert and extrovert has become important in recruitment, training, and many other areas. In practice, everyone has both introvert and extrovert tendencies, although one or the other usually predominates.<sup>210</sup>

2. *individuation* – Jung said that everyone is born with a particular character and set of instincts, based on the “collective unconscious.” Each individual then develops aims and aspirations. The process of individuation — of realizing these aims and reconciling inner conflicts in the search for inner wholeness and personal development — is the central concept of Jungian psychology.

Jungian therapy is concerned with engineering a series of psychological transformations in order to achieve individuation. These can be encouraged both by analyzing the personal unconscious using techniques like free association, and by accessing the collective unconscious. Analysands (a person undergoing psychoanalysis) are therefore encouraged to study myths that feature appropriate archetypes, and to measure their progress by checking for the appearance of particular archetypes in dreams. Individuation is, indeed, as much a spiritual quest as a psychological one: personal integration and development require the participation of the soul as well as the mind.<sup>211</sup>

3. *individual psychology* – Alfred Adler developed a remarkably simple model of human behavior. Everyone, he said, starts life by feeling inadequate: children know they are weaker than adults. This knowledge develops into an inferiority complex. Success in later life depends on compensating for this and developing feelings of self-esteem instead. The way individuals fit in with society and the environment is crucial to this process. People need to feel valued at work and in their relationships. Genuine friendships, loving families, successful partnerships, and physical fitness all play a part in psychological

health. Today's fascination with lifestyle owes much to Adler's revelation that people can define themselves by how they interact with the world.<sup>212</sup>

4. *behaviorism* – not all psychology concerns itself with delving into the unconscious. The famous experiment devised by Ivan Pavlov revealed a simple mechanism of learned behavior: if you ring a bell when you feed a dog, eventually the dog will start salivating at the sound of the bell, even when no food is available. He called this phenomenon the “conditioned response.” The Behaviorist School, founded in 1914 by the American psychologist John B. Watson, is based on the premise that humans, too, are governed by conditioned responses. Rejecting the theories of Freud and his successors as abstract hypotheses that cannot be proved scientifically, behaviorists seek to assess the human mind using laboratory techniques.

In practice, however, it is impossible to reduce the mind to stimulus and response. It may be relatively easy to see why the sound of running water induces the desire to urinate, or even why cocktail parties seem to make people feel thirsty. But the erotic power of a poem or the melancholy air of a particular place are psychological events far too complex to be quantified in this way.<sup>213</sup>

5. *cognitive psychology* – cognitive psychology proposes a model of the mind as a kind of computer: a mechanism for analyzing, storing, processing, and reusing information acquired from the senses. By surveying human “information processes” (for example, conducting memory tests and measuring attention spans), cognitive psychology has gained important insights into memory, problem solving, perception, and other mental processes. The study of language as a cognitive process has become a separate discipline, known as psycholinguistics. Cognitive psychology has become influential in other fields, especially computing, where scientists are trying to create neural networks — computers that “think” like people do. Robots can be trained to recognize objects by following a model of human pattern recognition, and the structure of computer

memory, with its easy-access, short-term component and its store of self-used data, mimics our own.<sup>214</sup>

A common-sense person would be dumbfounded to see psychologists, men of the medical profession, and scientists finding “facts” and discovering “therapies” that tap into the unconscious, dreams, hypnosis, and the like but cannot put their minds to the scripture of Allah (ﷻ) where the only true information lies. Modern psychotherapy and clinical psychology are based on a model of the mind with several components. For Freud, the mind fell into the conscious (readily accessible material such as people’s names or faces), the preconscious (material that lurks below the surface, but can be brought to mind, such as distant memories), and the unconscious (an inaccessible area containing ideas that have been repressed, and therefore cannot emerge into consciousness). Dreams, that emerge when the conscious mind’s grip on the psyche is dormant, are a vital route into the deepest reaches of the psyche. Carl Jung added the concept of the collective unconscious, a storehouse of cultural ideas and memories that are inherited from ancestors and that finds expression not just in dreams, but also in the form of myths and legends. To the detriment of this knowledge base and experience, unfortunately, this Qur’an, which takes man back to the accurate encounters, thoughts, words, relationships, and consequences of his human existence and nature, is not a matter of concern for the “scientific” establishments of modern times.

### **The Lords of Fashion-cum-Fornication**

The fashion and cosmetics industries have become the religio-social temples of our times. Fashion — the prevailing style in dress adopted by large numbers of the population — has morphed into the new social order. This phenomenon materialized almost entirely in the Western world; in other cultures, where styles have altered little over the centuries, creeping Westernization has in recent decades made inroads into Third-World psyches. Although many think of fashion as relating only to women’s clothing, from the European Middle



Agencies until the 19th century, it involved men as well. In the latter third of the 20th century many designers have made collections for women as well as men. Until the last century, clothes for the wealthy were tailored, with fashions changing only incrementally; the influence was from the top (the king's court) downward.<sup>215</sup>

However, during the 19th century, a new influence, that of the fashion designer or couturier, began to make itself felt. Charles Worth (1825–1895), in Paris and London, not only made clothes for those wealthy clients who could afford his services, he also sold designs to manufacturers for the purpose of producing cheaper copies. With the invention around the same time (1860s) of the sewing machine and the emergence of the paper pattern, followed much later by the development of mass production and artificial fibers, ready-to-wear clothing has gradually become the main source of fashion. The French influence, supreme throughout the first half of the 20th century, is now tempered by the works of designers in London, Milan, Rome, and New York.<sup>216</sup>

The cosmetics industry, a kissing cousin of its fashion counterpart, represents a parallel assault on human nature. Cosmetics are preparations for artificially beautifying the human hair and complexion, used in various historical periods by both men and women. Fashionable women in Western Europe have painted their faces since the Greek and Roman periods, to conform to a set of youthful ideals. The practice was rudimentary and unnatural in the later medieval period and during the 16th century. In the 17th and 18th centuries, black “patches” representing moles or beauty spots were popular, to contrast with the flawless effect of the rest of the complexion. For most of the 19th century, detectable “makeup” was considered the mark of the fast or theatrical rather than the respectable woman. Many of the preparations used until recent times were dangerous to the health, or even potentially fatal (for instance, white lead).<sup>217</sup>

In a sense, the fashion-conscious lady and gentleman have replaced the God-conscious personality. Drove of people are more interested in clothes, accompanying manners, and class mobility, than in their healthy physical and psychological relationships via

clothes. Designers, makers, and sellers of fashionable clothing for women (the couturiers and modistes) in particular have become, for all practical purposes, social lords, although few would want to look at the issue from this angle. These social lords set into motion social attire trends that can change from season to season or from year to year, but what does not change is the fabulous windfall they rake in from overhyping this one among many consumer addictions. The rest of society follows obediently and blindly. But if someone decides not to follow the social trend, the current style, or the fashionable society, then the very same culture is ready with its psychological games, labeling such people as geeks, misfits, and oddballs.

Who exactly are the people lurking behind the fashion, cosmetics, and entertainment industries, all of whom are connected by the common thread of greed, profit, and the attendant subversion of man's God-given human nature? Who finances these interest groups and corporate conglomerates? Who is not bothered, rather elated, when human beings descend into the abyss of erotica and free sex? Who skulks behind this crazed sex transfixion and the social engineering that makes it possible? There is a constant drumbeat of films, pictures, novels, and audio productions, not to mention newspapers and magazines, as well as their digital versions on the internet, that fuel this sex-mania. Sexually explicit art and writing has become an open invitation to unfaithfulness, infidelity, and promiscuity. The following list identifies some 30 influential Yahūdī families in the United States who have a hand in this moral meltdown:

1. *Arison* – based in Miami, Florida, Israeli-born Theodore “Ted” Arison founded the Carnival Cruise Lines. Ted’s son Micky now controls the family empire, which includes the cruise line, hotels, resorts, and the Miami Heat basketball team. Ted Arison returned to Israel.
2. *Barnett* – based in Fort Worth, Texas, Louis Barnett and his wife Madlyn are operating Hilton Hotels in Israel. Their son Eliot is involved in shopping center development. The family is also involved in real estate, pharmaceuticals, and oil; and funds Barnett Institute of Biotechnology at Northeastern University.

3. *Bloomberg* – based in New York, Michael Bloomberg started out at Salomon Brothers and went on to establish a multimedia empire providing stories to newspapers and a 24-hour direct satellite television network. He was elected mayor of New York City in 2001.
4. *Carter* – Victor Carter is said to have “specialized in the turnaround of ailing companies” but is best known for heading the United Way, City of Hope, and Israel Bonds. His wife Andrea has been involved in the Country Music Commission.
5. *Cone* – a large southern Jewish family (descended from the 13 original children of Herman Cone) that gained its wealth through Cone Mills (founded in 1895), the largest manufacturer of denim in the world.
6. *Crown* – based in Chicago, Illinois, the late Henry Crown was closely connected to organized crime in Chicago and built up a major real-estate empire whose assets were held by the Material Service Corporation, a building supply firm. In 1959, the family gained control of major defense contractor General Dynamics. The Crown family was a major player in helping finance Israel’s secret nuclear arms development program. Henry’s son Lester now heads the family, and his brother Dan operates Crown theaters.
7. *Eisner* – based in Los Angeles, California, Michael Eisner engineered the merger between Capital Cities, owner of ABC television broadcasting, and other properties. He also acquired the Walt Disney Company in 1984. Eisner is the grandson of the co-founder of the American Safety Razor Company.
8. *Eppler* – based in Cleveland, Ohio and Palm Beach, Florida, German-born Heinz Eppler took over Miller-Whol and expanded the company to 420 women’s apparel stores, which were sold in 1984 to Petrie Stores Corporation. Heinz’s son David is based in Washington, DC.
9. *Feldberg* – based in Boston, Massachusetts, cousins Sumner and Stanley Feldberg, founded the T.J. Maxx stores (with more than 500 outlets), Hit or Miss stores (with 500 outlets) and the Chadwick’s catalog operations.

10. *Haas* – the combined members of this immensely wealthy family are the heirs to the Levi-Strauss garment fortune. Altogether the combined wealth of the various members of the family places them beyond any question in the highest ranks of the US' wealthiest families.
11. *Hassenfeld* – based in New York and Rhode Island, the family is the heir to the Hasbro toy manufacturing empire, the world's largest toy company and producers of Mr. Potato Head and GI Joe. Family members include Alan and Harold.
12. *Lauder* – based in New York, Leonard and Ronald Lauder are the heirs to the Estee Lauder cosmetics fortune. Ronald also served as US ambassador to Austria, as president of the Jewish National Fund, and made a bid for mayor of New York City on the Republican ticket in 1989.
13. *Levin* – based in New York, Gerald Levin, who rose to become CEO of the Bronfman family-controlled Time-Warner empire, started out as a lieutenant of Lewis Strauss, the Jewish chief of the Atomic Energy Commission. Although there's nothing in the public record to suggest it, it's a good bet that Levin and Strauss had a hand in "helping" Israel achieve nuclear weapons capability. Today Levin is a member of the Rockefeller-funded Council on Foreign Relations.
14. *Levinson* – based in New York. Morris Levinson's widow, Barbara, has become a leading Jewish community figure through the distribution of Morris' largess, wealth accumulated through a food and cosmetics conglomerate that merged with Nabisco. Morris was also a founder of the Center for Democratic Studies, which has been described as "the first think tank." Morris' son Adam is based in Tallahassee, Florida but active in Jewish affairs nationwide. His son Joshua is a professor at Hebrew University, and daughter Judith is married to one John Oppenheimer, CEO of the Columbia Hospitality Group, which manages a wide variety of luxury hotels, golf courses, Port of Seattle facilities, luxury spas, cruise ships, and other ruling class establishments.
15. *Lippert* – based in New York, Albert and Felice Lippert made their millions helping millions of people lose weight. Teaming

- up with Jean Nidetch, a stout Jewish homemaker who had set up dieting support groups, they formed Weight Watchers International and sold the thriving enterprise to Heinz Foods in 1978. They have two sons, Keith and Randy.
16. *List* – based in New York, Albert List made a success in distributing appliances and then branched out, taking control of Hudson Coal Company. He ultimately grew into a conglomerate that included the RKO theater chain.
  17. *Marcus* – based in Dallas, Texas, this is the family of the famed Neiman-Marcus department store. Although the company was sold in 1969, Stanley remained on the board for several years. He also served as chairman of the American Retail Federation.
  18. *Perelman* – based in New York and born in Philadelphia, the heir to Belmont Industries, a metal fabricating enterprise that became a holding company for several other businesses in the region, Ronald Perelman now controls more than 44 companies through the MacAndrew & Forbes empire. Among his holdings are his best known, Revlon, the cosmetics giant, the Coleman Co. (which makes camping equipment), California Federal Bank, and Consolidated Cigar (which produces multiple cigar brands). His son Steven is involved in the family's business affairs.
  19. *Pritzker* – based in Chicago, Illinois, the family's gigantic fortune has included the Hyatt chain of hotels, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Continental (and now defunct Braniff) Airlines, McCall's magazine, and the Ticketmaster entertainment octopus. The family founder Nicholas was an immigrant from Kiev who established a law firm that he used to launch the climb to wealth and power. His sons Harry, Jack, and Abraham, and the latter's sons, Jay, Robert, and Donald, have been the "big" names in the family. Their Marmon Group "specializes in buying and restructuring troubled companies."
  20. *Redstone* – based in New York, Sumner Redstone, who was born "Rothstein," took over his father's movie theater chain and expanded it to nearly 900 affiliates. In 1987 he orchestrated the leveraged buyout of Viacom, Inc., which is one of

- the major global media enterprises, controlling Paramount Studios, Blockbuster Video, Simon & Schuster, Nickelodeon and MTV. His daughter Shari Redstone is increasingly involved in her father's empire.
21. *Saul* – based in New York, Joseph Saul founded the Brooks Fashion chain, which he sold for great profit in 1984. He is now churning his profits into many Jewish causes, Israeli interests in particular.
  22. *Simon* – based in Indianapolis, Indiana, brothers Melvin and Howard Simon have developed 62 malls and 55 shopping centers, making their conglomerate the second-largest shopping mall empires in the US. In 1996 their holdings grew even larger when they merged with the (non-Jewish) DeBartolo Realty Corporation. Melvin co-owns the Indiana Pacers basketball team and has produced “trash” films such as *Porky's*. His son David, who had been an investment banker at Credit Suisse First Boston and Wasserstein Perella & Co. is now assuming a role in the family business, which includes the famous Mall of America in Minneapolis, at one time the largest mall in America.
  23. *Smith* – based in Boston, Massachusetts and headed by Richard Smith, the General Cinema movie chain expanded to take control of Neiman-Marcus (the Dallas-based department store) along with Harcourt-Brace Publishing (now Harcourt General). General Cinema is now known as GC Cos. Richard's son Robert has taken over the family's affairs. The family is described as “very low profile.”
  24. *Spielberg* – based in Los Angeles, California, Stephen Spielberg is the movie legend responsible for a wide array of popular films, not to mention *Schindler's List*. His primary company is Dreamworks SKG; Amblin Entertainment is another part of the Spielberg empire.
  25. *Stone* – based in Cleveland, Ohio, Irving, Morris, and Harry Stone were heirs to the American Greetings (card) Corporation. The cartoon figure “Ziggy” is one of their contributions to popular culture.

26. *Stoneman* – based in Boston, Massachusetts, Samuel Stoneman was vice chairman of the board of General Cinema Corporation. His daughters are Jane Stein and Elizabeth Deknatel. They run the family's foundation.
27. *Syms* – based in New York, Sy Syms, head of the Syms Corporation, which owns a chain of 40 stores selling designer labels at discount prices, has brought his son Robert and daughter Marcy into the family business. Marcy has been a vice president of the American Jewish Congress. The family has also branched out into real estate.
28. *Tisch* – based in New York, the family is best known today for its control of the CBS broadcasting empire; leading supporters of Israel, Lawrence and Preston Tisch recently died. Loews, CAN Financial, Lorillard, and Bulova are all part of the Tisch empire. Lawrence had sons James, Daniel, Tom, and Andrew, the latter involved in the executive committee of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Preston, who was co-owner of the New York Giants football team, served as postmaster general of the United States. His son Steve is a filmmaker and his son Jonathan is the president of Loews hotels.
29. *Wasserman* – based in Los Angeles, California, the late Lou Wasserman, longtime head of MCA, the entertainment conglomerate, was — along with his partner, Jules Stein — a sponsor of the rise to fame (in films and in politics) of Ronald Reagan. He has been called the “king” of Hollywood.
30. *Wexner* – based in New York and Columbus, Ohio, Leslie Wexner owns it all: The Limited, Express, Lerner's, Victoria's Secret, Henry Bendel, Abercrombie & Fitch, Bath and Body Works, and Lane Bryant. He is particularly concerned with educating future Jewish leaders.
31. *Winik* – based in New York, Elaine Winik was the first female president of the United Jewish Appeal-Federation, the largest local philanthropy in the world, and chair of the United Jewish Appeal. Her daughter Penny Goldsmith is a major figure in AIPAC and in the ADL. The Winik fortune was made in the production of handbags.

32. *Zale* – based in Texas, Morris Zale established one of the world's largest jewelry chains, but the company was sold in 1987. Heirs David, Marjory, Stanley, and Janet are active in Jewish affairs. The two sons still work in the jewelry business.<sup>218</sup>

This is just the tip of the iceberg: there are 540 billionaires in the US with a net worth of \$2.4 trillion, some half of these are Jews. The powerful Yahūdī elite exerts its dominant influence upon the “sheeple” who go wherever they are taken. If the sheeple are corralled into a bevy of sex addictions, fashions, and cults, then that is where they think they will find comfort. From Fruedian theories, to the roaring twenties (1920s), to the baby-boom generation, to the hippies, to the new age, the transformation of decorous humans into libidinous man has been in inexorable progress, supervised by the Yahūd. And as they march humanity to its inevitable destruction, themselves included, they congratulate themselves for the tidy profits they are making along the way.

People should not think that man's dress code is too trivial a matter for Allah (ﷻ) to spend time and words on. If He is man's Sustainer and Lord, then He is the one to tell him how to dress. The instructions on this matter come from Him. This is a moral issue as much as it is an economic issue — the two are intertwined. The social human was divinely blessed with refined qualities and never shall these qualities be subverted to the unbecoming conduct conducive to animals. The anti-scriptural social norms of societies in denial of God have found ways to deform and disregard what God says about cultivated taste, genteel values, and well-mannered behavior. In such societies nudity is synonymous with progress and civility, whereas modest dress decorum is associated with regression and retardation. The distance between the state of nature endowed to man by God and the denatured state of *jāhili* man has reached a breaking point.

If man continues to entertain the type of ignorance that these matters are too inconsequential to fall under the purview of God, then his society will eventually collapse. Societies survive as long as they honor the decency in human nature and the values and man-



nerisms that preserve it. But once a society violates this decency and morality it begins to disintegrate until it finally vanishes, **“For all people a term has been set: and when [the end of] their term approaches, they can neither delay it by a single moment, nor can they hasten it.”** A long and tortuous immoral course precedes the final day of social collapse. Once that day arrives, the matter would have already been decided. The rot that had set in generations ago, multiplying exponentially, eventually culminates in the total decomposition and annihilation of that doomed social unit. For some superficial thinkers there is an unbridgeable distance between what man eats and how he dresses on the one hand, and the breakdown of society on the other hand. Those who are “tuned in” understand that our integrity and constitution as subjects of Allah (ﷻ) is directly related to the survivability of our social being. In this regard, the Prophet (ﷺ) is known to have advised,

*The worst container a child of Adam could fill is his stomach. Suffice it for him a few bites that will hold up his back. And if he is to eat [more], then one-third of his abdomen is for food, a third is for water, and a third is for air.*<sup>219</sup>

*A God-denier takes [food] into seven abdomens while a committed Muslim takes [food] into one abdomen.*<sup>220</sup>

It is imperative to reconstitute man’s individual and social life. This is made abundantly clear in the course of this lesson and many other lessons throughout this informative Qur’an. The well-being and survival of peoples and societies depends upon their affirmation of Allah’s authority. Once they do away with that they begin a descending course that will climax with their invalidation and destruction. This is a matter between *imān* and *shirk*: either we affirm Allah’s authority in theory and practice or we affirm everything and anything except Him. And the Prophet (ﷺ) showed us the way, **“And We did not send you but as a mercy to all people” (21:107).**

## Paradise and Hell Are Not Metaphors

The last lesson went into some detail about why man covering himself, or “veiling” his nakedness so to speak, is an act of compliance to Allah (ﷻ). While this is important in and of itself, especially as it pertains to modesty and beauty both in man’s physique and psychology, it also acts as a metaphor for the soul having its own tunic, which is the overwhelming consciousness of Allah’s power presence (*taqwá*). This lesson goes into the post-worldly reality of humanity. The recurring theme tying each lesson to its precursor, and each new body of information to its former, is that Allah is the source of man’s livelihood and the seat of his lively authority. At this point, the *sūrah* ensues with narratives about the Prophets (ﷺ), all of whom had an immense task in not only standing up for the truth from Allah, but more to the point, in standing against those who are in conflict with Him. These prophets spoke in clear terms, as should be expected, and thus immediately the lines were drawn between their would-be supporters and their foes and attackers.

- (7:35) O children of Adam! Whenever there come to you apostles of your own, conveying My messages to you, then all who are conscious of Me and live righteously — no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve;
- (7:36) But those who give the lie to Our messages and scorn them in their pride — these are destined for the Fire, therein to abide.
- (7:37) And who could be more wicked than those who attribute their own lying inventions to Allah or give the lie to His messages? Whatever has been decreed to be their lot [in life] will be theirs — until there shall come to them Our messengers to cause them to expire, [and] shall say, “Where, now, are those beings whom you were wont to invoke beside Allah?” And [those sinners] will reply, “They have forsaken us!” — and [thus] they will bear witness against themselves that they had been denying the truth.

يَبِيَّ ءَادَمَ إِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِنْكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ ءَايَاتِي ۖ فَمَنْ أَتَقَى  
وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا  
وَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَمَنْ  
أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ ۗ أُولَئِكَ يَنَالُهُمْ نَصِيبُهُمْ  
مِنَ الْكُذْبِ حَقٌّ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ رُسُلُنَا يَتَوَفَّوْنَهُمْ قَالُوا آيِنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ  
تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ ۗ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا  
كَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَّرٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ  
وَالْإِنسِ فِي النَّارِ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا آدَارَكُوا فِيهَا  
جَمِيعًا قَالَتْ أُخْرَبْتُمْ وَأُولَئِهِم رَبُّنَا هَلْؤَلَاءِ أَضَلُّونَا فَتَاتِهِمْ عَدَابًا ضِعْفًا  
مِّنَ النَّارِ ۗ قَالَ لِكُلِّ ضِعْفٌ وَلَٰكِن لَّا نَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَالَتْ أُولَئِهِمْ  
لَأُخْرَبْتُمْ فَمَا كَانَتْ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِن فَضْلِ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ  
تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفِئِحُ لَهُمْ  
أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّىٰ يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ  
وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ لَهُمْ مِّنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ  
غَوَاشٍ ۗ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا

الصَّلِحَاتِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ  
 فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنْ غَلِيٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ  
 وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَن هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَقَدْ  
 جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَنُودُوا أَن تِلْكَمُ الْجَنَّةُ أُوْرِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ  
 تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَن قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبَّنَا  
 حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا قَالُوا نَعَمْ فَأَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ أَن لَعْنَةُ  
 اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَهُمْ  
 بِالْآخِرَةِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا  
 بِسِيمَانِهِمْ وَنَادُوا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَن سَلِّمُوا عَلَيْنَا لَمَّا يَدْخُلُوهَا وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ  
 ﴿٤٦﴾ وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَاءَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ  
 الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَانِهِمْ قَالُوا مَا أَغْنَى  
 عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ أَهْتُولَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمْتُمْ لَا  
 يَنَالُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ أَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ مَحْزُونُونَ  
 ﴿٤٩﴾ وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَن أَفِيضُوا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ  
 مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَهَا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا  
 فَأَلِيمَ نَسْنَسَهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هَذَا وَمَا كَانُوا  
 بِعَائِنِنَا يُجْحَدُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَلَقَدْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ هُدًى  
 وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا تَأْوِيلَهُ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلَهُ  
 يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ نَسُوهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنَّا بِالْحَقِّ فَهَلْ لَنَا مِنْ  
 شُفْعَاءَ فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا أَوْ نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ قَدْ خَسِرُوا  
 أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

- (7:38) [And Allah] will say, “Join those legions of invisible beings and humans who have gone before you into the Fire!” [And] every time a legion enters [the Fire], it will curse its counterpart — so much so that, when they all shall have passed into it, one after another, the last of them will speak [thus] of the first of them, “O our Sustainer! It is they who have led us astray: give, them, therefore, double suffering through fire!” He will reply, “Every one of you deserves double suffering — but you know it not.”
- (7:39) And the first of them will say to the last of them, “So you were in no way superior to us! Taste, then, this suffering for all [the evil] that you were wont to do!”
- (7:40) Verily, to those who give the lie to Our messages and scorn them in their pride, the gates of heaven shall not be opened; and they shall not enter Paradise any more than

a twisted rope can pass through a needle's eye: for thus do We requite such as are lost in sin.

- (7:41) Hell will be their resting-place and their covering as well: for thus do We requite the evildoers.
- (7:42) But those who commit themselves [to Us] and do righteous deeds — [and] We do not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear — they are destined for Paradise, therein to abide,
- (7:43) After We shall have removed whatever unworthy thoughts or feelings may have been [lingering] in their bosoms. Running waters will flow at their feet; and they will say, "All praise is due to Allah, who has guided us to this; for we would certainly not have found the right path unless Allah had guided us! Indeed, our Sustainer's apostles have told us the truth!" And [a voice] will call out to them, "This is the Paradise you have inherited by virtue of your past deeds!"
- (7:44) And the folks of Paradise will call out to the inmates of the Fire, "Now we have found that what our Sustainer promised us has come true; have you, too, found that what your Sustainer promised has come true?" [The others] will answer, "Yes!" — whereupon from their midst a voice will loudly proclaim, "Allah's rejection is the due of the evildoers,
- (7:45) "Who turn others away from Allah's path and try to make it appear crooked, and who refuse to acknowledge the truth of the life to come!"
- (7:46) And between the two there will be a barrier. And there will be persons who [in life] were endowed with the faculty of discernment [between right and wrong], recognizing each by its mark. And they will call out to the folks of Paradise, "Peace be upon you!" — not having entered it themselves, but longing [for it].
- (7:47) And whenever their eyes are turned toward the inmates of the Fire, they will cry, "O our Sustainer! Place us not among the people who have been guilty of evildoing!"
- (7:48) And they who [in life] had possessed this faculty of discernment will call out to those whom they recognize

- by their marks [as sinners], saying, “What has your amassing [of wealth] availed you, and all the false pride of your past?”
- (7:49) “Are those [blessed and God-conscious ones] the self-same people of whom you once solemnly declared, ‘Never will Allah bestow His grace upon them?’ [For now they have been told] ‘Enter Paradise; no fear need you have, and neither shall you grieve!’”
  - (7:50) And the inmates of the Fire will call out to the folks of Paradise, “Pour some water upon us, or some of the sustenance [of Paradise] that Allah has provided for you!” [The folks of Paradise] will reply, “Verily, Allah has denied both to those who have denied the truth —
  - (7:51) “Those who, beguiled by the life of this world, have made play and passing delights their religion!” [And Allah will say], “And so We shall be oblivious of them today as they were oblivious of the coming of this, their Day [of Judgement], and as Our messages they did deny:
  - (7:52) “For, indeed, We did convey to them a divine Writ that We clearly, and wisely, spelled out — a guidance and a grace to people who will commit [themselves to Us].”
  - (7:53) Are [the deniers of Allah’s power] but waiting for the final meaning of that [Day of Judgement] to unfold? [But] on the Day when its final meaning is unfolded, those who aforesaid had been oblivious thereof will say, “Our Sustainer’s apostles have indeed told us the truth! Have we, then, any intercessors who could intercede on our behalf? Or could we be brought back [to life] so that we might act otherwise than we were wont to act?” Indeed, they will have squandered their own selves, and all their false imagery will have forsaken them (al-A'rāf:35–53).

It is a consistent feature of human history that Allah (ﷻ) sends peoples and societies one of their own to express His word and will. These messengers spend a lifetime imparting revelation and illustrating scripture. As a result, the children of Adam (ﷺ) have but two choices: either they listen and obey without coercion or they do

not. Both of these decisions have their consequences — the former favorable and fruitful and the latter lamentable and destructive,

**O children of Adam! Whenever there come to you apostles of your own, conveying My messages [of power and authority], then all who are conscious of Me [My power and authority] and live aright — no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve; but those who belie Our messages [of authority and power] and reject them with contempt — these are destined for the Fire, therein to abide forever (7:35–36).**

Those who adorn their psychology with the certainty of Allah's power presence and move through life with that conviction shall know no fear or sorrow. Conversely, those who renounce and negate Allah's messages of power — as happened with the Makkan establishment when it repudiated Muhammad (ﷺ) as a matter of overbearing pride or presumption — will find themselves in the fire of Hell for a time without end.

Prophets are lightning rods: you either love them or hate them. The “radical” element of their scriptures leaves no gray area or blurred lines. Individuals who join these prophets and apostles may endure hard times in the material world but their psychology is free of fear and cleared of grief. This is also their feature on the Day of Judgement. By contrast those who are disdainful and egotistical when humble apostles speak to them, show little interest in the uplifting guidance being delivered. These are the permanent companions of the Fire.

The Qur'an incessantly describes the life to come, speaks about it in moving detail, and sheds light on the magnitude of its felicity and despondency. Anyone who reads this Qur'an with mind and heart begins to relocate to that reality in a way that is sometimes hard to grasp. In other words, thoughts and feelings acculturated by the Qur'an move their human objects so much that they think they are in the life of eternity more than in this short-term or transitory life.



This lesson dwells longer on the scenes of the ultimate and endmost life than almost any other one. Its motion picture of words instead of frames follows the temptation of Adam and Eve (ﷺ) and their ejection from the Garden due to Satan's suggestions and intensive inferences. Allah (ﷻ) loves man so much that He advises, teaches, and counsels him lest Satan seduce him the same way he seduced his parents from the Garden. Allah cautions him against his eternal and ageless enemy, as well as this enemy's power to drop hints and make proposals. Allah makes clear that if people fail their own apostles and prophets, they will give both joy and agency to Satan.

This ties in to the moment of death and the closely ensuing scenes of Judgement Day, as if there is no hiatus between the time of death and the time of accountability. In this "other world" the words of the apostles and prophets ring clear. Those who obeyed Satan are denied the Garden; they will have no standing in it. While those who disobeyed Satan and obeyed Allah (ﷻ) are brought back to the Garden, and welcomed from the maximum heights of heaven, **"For you this Garden, you have inherited it by virtue of what you did [in the past life]."**

### **Worldly Power Diminishes in the Presence of Divine Power**

The moment of death is indicative of a person losing all his faculties and senses, all the physical and material components that made his life possible on earth. This is the moment when the soul leaves the body. However, these *āyāt* are focusing more exclusively on those people who had negated what Allah (ﷻ) was telling them by way of His Apostles and Prophets (ﷺ). These dying people spent a lifetime saying that their traditions, culture, customs, and whatever erroneous legal codes evolved therefrom, which they had inherited from their forefathers and ancestors, were from God. Or rather, God had commanded them to live by these specious features of their societies. True, some or most of them may have enjoyed their worldly lives to the utmost. But on the Final Day, they will have to attest to the fact that they knew the guidance

they received from Allah's apostles was truthful, but they nonetheless denied it,

**And who could be more offensive than he who forges lies and attributes them to Allah, or he who adulterates and abuses Our messages [pertaining to authority and power]. Finally, Our [angelic] messengers come to terminate their time [on earth]. They said, "Where are those whom you invoked besides Allah?" They said, "But they appear to be out of line with us." And they bore witness against their own selves [saying] that they were deniers [of Allah's authority and power] (7:37).**

Here Allah (ﷻ) is bringing the committed Muslims into close proximity with those who contradicted Him in this life — as they finally succumb and depart from this earthly life. These were the ones who were satisfied with a ritual God and not an authoritative God; with a theoretical divinity and not a practical one. The angels are dispatched to take away their souls and leave their bodies to the laws of nature, but these are not comforting moments, **"They [the angels] said, 'Where are those [authoritative powers] that you [in your past life] had conjured up, to the exclusion of Allah?'"**

They are being challenged to prove the validity of their worldly fancies of authority and power. They had considered their own gods and superiors — whether of stone, ideology, or wealth — authentic and effective, so much so that they were foolhardy in denying what God's apostles were saying about "authority" and "power." In the throes of death, they finally come to terms with the fact that their earthly authoritative superiors and temporal powerful forces have no standing where the power of Allah (ﷻ) is concerned. Those pusillanimous worldly powers have no input into this decisive moment between planetary life and death, **"They [the deniers of Allah's power and authority] said, 'They [our false worldly authorities and powers] have abandoned us!'"** The only power the earthly pretenders to power had was the power of illusion — not unlike Satan's power of suggestion. And so, what can they

do in this moment of truth? Nothing. They are absent because they were never real to begin with. Pity the people who spent a lifetime honoring the wrong authorities and bowing to the wrong powers when at this sensitive moment of death they realize that it was all in vain. What kind of transcending power did they have that in this critical moment of need, they are unresponsive?

**“And they bore witness against their own selves — that, indeed, they were deniers [of Allah’s authority and power].”** Such is the behavior of the hardened *kāfirs*; they can only realize the truth when their false power structure is shown for what it is, a weak and crumbling fantasy. It is a shame and a scandal that they could not appraise this fact before it was too late. But what is the excuse of those who know all this and yet, are still prone to repeat this foolishness?

Death, here, is not an end; rather it is just a door to a new and permanent reality, and as regards these deniers and pretenders, their new reality is the Fire. The “time” that lapsed between the moment of death in the previous *āyah* and now their appearance inside the fire leaves the impression that the dimension of time has collapsed, for there is no “time” between these two scenes,

**[And Allah] will say, “Enter you into the company of colonies — both humankind and jinn-kind that predated you — enter upon the Fire. Every time a colony enters [the Fire] it imprecates its counterpart. And when they are all clustered in it [the Fire] the last [colony] says to the first, “Our Sustainer! These are the ones who led us astray so double up their share of the fire.” He said, “Each has its multiplier, although you are not aware of it.” And the first [colony] said to the last, “You had no privilege over us; experience the torment due to you for what you acquired [in the outgoing life]” (7:38–39).**

Those who can read and understand the Qur’an will take note that the words here are a consummate reality: one can “see” what he is reading, **“Move into positions adjoining communities that pre-**

ceded you [in worldly time-sequence] — those being both of the human and jinn species — that are located in the Fire.”

Now is when like joins like. They were alike in the life of the world; they all contended against Allah’s power and authority. The more they hyped His mercy and grace — so as to assuage their guilty conscience for their transgressions or to mislead the masses into enduring their excesses with the hope that in the next life things would be better — the more they knocked down His authority and power. Thus their inevitable rendezvous takes place in the open fire. Iblīs was the one who originally disobeyed Allah (ﷻ). He caused Adam and his wife (ﷻ) to be evicted from the Garden. He tempted and mislead many of Adam’s children. And it was Allah who promised this deviant fraternity of Satan a share of the fire. Therefore, this is the time for them to experience the punishment they so richly deserved, but simultaneously denied on earth. Predecessors or successors, regardless: they were thrown into the fire because they lived a life at odds with Allah’s authority and in dispute of His power.

When these types were in the world, they lived as inseparable allies with a common purpose, playing out their affinities in alliances and pacts as they dislocated millions in wars of aggression and impoverished countless millions of others in phoney trickle-downs that mostly trickled up. But on that Day of Resurrection, Judgement, and Destiny, their true character of treachery, selfishness, and disloyalty will be exposed, as they go after one another, **“Every time a nation enters [the Fire] it damns its matching parallel [nation].”** What an outcome: the confederates of temporal existence, from the inception of man until his end, argue with and roundly curse each other,

So much so that when they all shall have trekked into it [the Fire], one after another, the last of them will speak [thus] of the first of them, **“O our Sustainer! It is they who have misled us: give, them, therefore, a double dose of the fire!”** (7:38).

Those lords in this world, those exclusive elites, those power classes, economic executives, and conglomerate capitalists, as well as all the “sheeple” who followed them, obeyed them, and fell in with them are now a tragic comedy and pathetic charade. Those friends and compatriots who were bosom buddies in their worldly schemes of control become assailants, enemies, and finger-pointers. They slam insults on one another, beseeching “our Sustainer” to impose the harshest penalties on a one-time confidant and comrade. Listen to them calling upon “our Sustainer,” a title they spent a lifetime dismembering. What a time to acknowledge the one and only Lord, when all has been decided and the oft-recommended time of repentance and return has expired. Now that they all find themselves subjected to His authority, there is no more reprieve, **“He [Allah] said, ‘Each [community] has its punishment multiplier; but you cannot perceive it.’”** Their due share of the punishment will be reproduced and multiplied. Their ugly, self-serving psychology will be on display for all to see, **“And the first of them will say to the last of them, ‘So you were in no way superior to us! Experience, then, this suffering for all [the evil] you were wont to do!’”**

Finally, Allah (ﷻ) discloses His concluding comment on this category of people who incurred for themselves this miserable fate,

**Of a certainty, those who contradict our messages [of power and authority] and show contempt for them, the gates of heaven shall not be opened for them; and they shall not enter the Garden any more than a twisted rope (*jamal*) can pass through a needle’s eye: for thus do We requite such as are criminal. Hell will be their resting-place and their canopy as well: for thus do We requite the evildoers (7:40–41).**

Another meaning of the word *jamal* is *camel*, which is the preponderant meaning in the Arabic language. And thus the sentence in the *āyah* above would read, **“...and they shall not enter the Garden any more than a camel can pass through a needle’s eye.”** The improbability of such an occurrence suggests an air of perpetuity —

that such people who deny God's authority and power will never enter Paradise (or at least, not for a very, very long time).

Oppressors are criminals. They broke from Allah's standard of justice, devising their own institutional authorities and systems of justice. In doing so they misrepresented God and then they went on to devise their own values and laws. Allah (ﷻ) is not easygoing with criminals of this magnitude, **"It is in such a way that We redress criminals."** They will be situated in the fire in a way that, **"Hell will be their rest-area as well as a canopy above them: and thus do We requite oppressors."**

Some people will raise the objection that this is very harsh — and harsher yet that they be punished forever. But, congruently, are not the man-made systems of oppression, exploitation, and injustice in this world extremely harsh? Has anyone from this "humanitarian" crowd paused to think of the areas of the world where children are dying in their mothers arms because there is no food? Has anyone of these "delicate souls" been to societies that — in their tens of millions — are living under the poverty line and at the survival level due to man-made values and laws? Have any of these "good Samaritans" experienced the utter hopelessness of millions of dislocated refugees who had to abandon their homes because of man-made wars of aggression? Did anyone of these "God is too harsh and vindictive" spectators ever wonder that humanity has a just God who will not let mass criminals and transnational oppressors get away with their crimes against God and humanity?

At the same time, there is something to look forward to for those who committed themselves to Allah's authority and power when they were on earth, doing whatever was in their capacity,

**But for those who commit themselves [to Our authority and power] and improve on their deeds — [and] We do not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear — they are destined for Paradise, therein to abide forever, after We shall have removed whatever unworthy thoughts or feelings may have been [lingering] in their bosoms. Running waters will flow at their feet;**

and they will say, “All praise is due to Allah, who has guided us to this; for we would certainly not have found the right path unless Allah had guided us! Indeed, our Sustainer’s apostles have told us the truth!” And [a voice] will call out to them, “This is the Paradise you have inherited by virtue of your past deeds!” (7:42–43).

They will return to their Garden of Bliss, just as their primordial parents were there in the very beginning. They are its companions and occupants, as a matter of Allah’s grace and approval. They will inherit it because they did what was right as a matter of their conviction and faith in Allah (ﷻ). They proved they were the disciples of apostles and the foes of Satan. They honored a lifetime in the service of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. Despite all their best efforts, they realized it will take more than what they can do with their limited capacities to enter Paradise. But they did not lose hope or lack confidence in Allah, for they knew they had to do whatever they could, even if that fell short of the anticipated results. Affirming this, the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said,

*“None of you will enter the Garden. [So] they asked, “Not even you, O Messenger of Allah? He said, “Not even me, except that Allah surrounds me with mercy and benevolence from Him.”<sup>221</sup>*

There is some argumentation among Muslims about this hadith. Suffice it to say that there are no contradictions in understanding it if it could just be acknowledged that we are human beings prone to mistakes and wrongdoing; and had Allah wanted to turn “technical” with people, they would all probably be denied access to Paradise. Thus, He is not vindictive, rather compassionate, and will be appreciative of man’s overall effort that is dedicated to Him even if it is punctuated with shortcomings, errors, and even some sins.

Those who committed themselves to Allah (ﷻ) and labored for that commitment in worldly life will be relaxing amicably in

eternal peace and brotherhood, but only **“...after We shall have removed whatever unworthy thoughts or feelings that may have been [lingering] in their bosoms.”** They are humans, they lived as humans; and in worldly life they may have entertained unworthy notions toward each other, which they held in check, struggling against their errant proclivities. The effects of that may accompany them into their new domicile in Paradise but then these negative attitudes will be divinely banished. It is reported that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib said, “I hope that ‘Uthmān [ibn ‘Affān], Ṭalḥah [ibn ‘Ubaydilāh], al-Zubayr [ibn al-‘Awwām], and I are included in those described by Allah in, **“...after We shall have removed whatever unworthy thoughts or feelings that may have been [lingering] in their bosoms.”**”

There is a world of contrast between the inheritors of Heaven and the denizens of Hell. As the fire rages on and burns from above and below the inmates of Hell, the residents of Paradise will have rivers flowing beneath them in an atmosphere of gentle wind and breeze, **“Running waters will flow below them.”** The people of Hell will be obsessed with aspersion and smears while the people of Paradise will be preoccupied with thanks and appreciation:

**And they said, “All appreciation is due to Allah who has guided us to this [consequence]; and we would not have been guided had He not guided us. The apostles of our Sustainer have delivered the truth (7:43).**

The Hell dwellers will be rebuked and berated, **“Enter into the company colonies — both human and jinn — that preceded you into the fire.”** But the residents of Paradise will be recognized and greeted, **“And [a voice] will call out to them, ‘This is the Paradise you have inherited by virtue of your past deeds.’”**

Now that both have been admitted into their permanent domiciles, the inhabitants of Paradise call on the condemned of the Fire, asking them about Allah’s promise way back when in the life of the world,



And the companions of Paradise called on the companions of the Fire, “We have found what our Sustainer promised us to be true. So have you found what your Sustainer promised to be true?” They said, “Yes.” Then a voice within them is heard saying, “Indeed, the damnation of Allah is upon crime-doers — those who divert from Allah’s course, trying to project it as unsteady, and who are deniers of the endmost life (7:44–45).

*Kufr* lays out the domain in which oppression operates, “**And those who deny Allah — it is they who are the oppressors!**” (2:254). This *āyah* points out that oppressors in worldly affairs were the deniers of the world to come. These oppressors had to reject any notion of a coming life of justice and accountability to be able to implement their policies of injustice and tyranny. To be able to exert total control over society, they deliberately thought up a suite of programs that would project Allah’s organization of society as dysfunctional. They wanted to cast Islam as irregular and asymmetric. Their worldly secular methods and God-denying strategies were all meant to exclude Allah’s political platform and political program. Once they succeeded in effacing the *ākhirah* from the public mind, it was only a matter of time before they completed their structure of tyranny and gloominess. It is not easy for a person to organize instability on earth knowing full well that he is returning to a Lord of justice. To engineer conditions of chaos on earth when the reality of the *ākhirah* occupies the public mind and collective heart of populations is a difficult proposition. But the elites who steal God’s attribute of authority and power know this all too well.

### God Decides the Proportion of His Justice and Mercy

In this portion of the discourse, the *āyāt* bring a physical observation into focus: the barrier between Paradise and the Fire. In the vicinity of this barrier, there are people who know the distinguishing features of individuals on both sides. The Qur'an relates what takes place between them,

**And between the two there will be a barrier. And there will be persons who [in life] were endowed with the faculty of discernment [between right and wrong], recognizing each by its visible clue. And they will call out to the residents of Paradise, "Peace be upon you!" — not having entered it themselves, but longing [for it]. And whenever their eyes are turned toward the inmates of the Fire, they will cry, "O our Sustainer! Place us not among the people who have been guilty of crime-doing!" And they who [in life] possessed this faculty of discernment will call out to those whom they recognize by their visual marks [as sinners], saying, "What has your amassing [of wealth] availed you, and all the false pride of your past? Are those [blessed ones] the self-same people of whom you once solemnly declared, 'Never will Allah bestow His grace upon them'? [For now they have been told], 'Enter Paradise; no fear need you have, and neither shall you grieve!'" (7:46–49).**

It is said that the people located at this barrier between Heaven and Hell are a group of individuals who had a perfect match between (or equal number of) their good deeds and bad deeds. Neither could the sum of their good deeds deliver them to Paradise nor could their bad deeds condemn them to the fire. They, therefore, are in a state of limbo, as they await Allah's amnesty and His grace. Be that as it may, these people in limbo are able to distinguish the people of Paradise either due to their radiant faces or the light that glows from their conviction and *īmān*; and they are also able to distinguish the people of the fire

due to their flushed, depressing, or pitch-dark faces. These people equidistant from Heaven and Hell greet the people of Paradise with peace, they express their greeting with the longing and expectation that Allah (ﷻ) will eventually permit them to enter Paradise. On the other hand, when their eyes fall upon the people in the fire they ask Allah's shelter and protection from ever having to go there.

At this point, these persons of discernment are able to pick out some important worldly figures, known for their crimes and felonies, and speak to them critically and rebukingly,

**And the persons of discernment will call out to those whom they recognize by their marks [as sinners], saying, “What has your amassing [of wealth] availed you, and all the false pride of your past?” (7:48).**

This means that nothing in the past world — money, status, advocates — can deliver these sinners and oppressors from this incendiary destiny. Furthermore, the people of the fire are reminded of their derogatory remarks and propaganda against the underclasses and the oppressed, **“Are those [heavenly blessed-ones] the self-same people of whom you once solemnly declared, ‘Never will Allah bestow His grace upon them?’”** Then they get a chance to see where the oppressed of the world eventually end up, **“Enter the Garden of Bliss — you shall not fear and you shall not grieve.”**

In the final caption of this moving picture, a voice from the pits of the fire, a voice concealing the feelings of expectation and solicitation calls out,

**And the fellows of the Fire will call out to the fellows of the Garden [saying], “Pour some water upon us, or some of the provisions [of Paradise] that Allah has provided for you (7:50).**

But Allah (ﷻ) responds with a bitter reminder,

They said, “Verily, Allah has denied both to those who have denied Him — those who, beguiled by the life of this world, have made their *dīn* an antic and a stunt (7:50–51).

Then all human voices fall silent, as the Lord of glory and majesty, the Sovereign Power and the Judge, speaks,

[And Allah will say], “And so We shall be oblivious of them today as they were oblivious of the coming of this, their Day [of Judgement], and as Our messages they did deny: for, indeed, We did convey to them a divine Writ that We clearly, and wisely, spelled out — a guidance and a grace to people who will commit [themselves to Us].”

Are [the deniers of Allah’s power] but waiting for the final meaning of that [Day of Judgement] to unfold? [But] on the Day when its final meaning is unfolded, those who aforesaid had been oblivious thereof will say, “Our Sustainer’s apostles have indeed told us the truth! Have we, then, any intercessors who could intercede on our behalf? Or could we be brought back [to life] so that we might act otherwise than we were wont to act?” Indeed, they will have squandered their own selves, and all their false imagery will have forsaken them (7:51–53).

This display clearly distinguishes between two blocs of people and the psychology and words that characterize their reality and destiny. In particular, there are the miserable ones in the fire, those who are ignored as a consequence of their deliberate dismissal and disregard of Allah’s messages of authority and power. They once had a Book that explained it all to them. Allah (ﷻ) offered them all the details they needed, but they paid no attention to them, brushing them aside for their lusts, fancies, and dubiousness. They brought it upon themselves and thus they have no one to blame ex-

cept their own wrong choices and aversion of their Maker. And so, it follows that they end up in the fire.

On a final note, making water available to those who do not have it is one of the most gracious and meritorious deeds in human life. It has been reported that Sa'd ibn 'Ubādaḥ came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked, "Which charity most impresses you?" to which the latter said, "[Giving] water [to those who need it]." <sup>222</sup> This obviously indicates that donating or contributing water is a kindness and generosity second to none. There was even a coined expression in the first generations after the Prophet (ﷺ), "Whoever has accumulated sins may want to offer water [for dissipation of sins]." <sup>223</sup> Allah (ﷻ) pardoned the sins of a man because that man gave water to a thirsty dog. <sup>224</sup> Another hadith says,

*Whoever offers water to a Muslim in a land with water it is as if he freed a captive; and whoever offers water to a Muslim in a land without water it is as if he revived a dead person.* <sup>225</sup>

But in the *āyah* above, the people of Paradise will not be permitted to give water to the inmates of the fire. This speaks volumes about the justice that will take its course upon those who institutionalized injustice in this world by omitting Allah's authority and proscribing His worldly power presence. That this is a serious issue should never be doubted, especially for the kind of fantastic notions that magnify Allah's mercy at the expense of His justice.

## Man Is Not to Corrupt God's World Order

From the extraordinary details of his future and destiny in the *ākhirah*, man is transported back to the world of nature and wonder here in the immediate world. One of the stylistic aspects that makes the Qur'an fascinating is the ease with which it transitions over time and place, without ever departing from the constant focus on life and life-giving meanings. After concentrating man's attention on his own creation, Allah (ﷻ) drives him to consider the creation of the cosmos and the earth, their substance and meaning. The *āyāt* talk about a night in pursuit of a day within a circulating orbit; the Sun, the Moon, and the stars as objects of utility and convenience, by Allah's leave; and blowing winds in the atmosphere moving clouds over arid lands, only to bring them to life with plants and vegetation.

This mental excursion into the universe follows the story of man's genesis; the information pertaining to the dichotomy between the nature of good and the nature of evil; the admonition about the ways of Satan and the attitude of feeling "too important" to listen to what Allah (ﷻ) has to say; and the endemic concepts of wayward societies that have abandoned Allah, His scripture, and His Prophets (ﷺ). The sequence of this delivery gives man a better understanding of the world and its Sustainer, who created existence and its dimensions in a way to serve and nurture human life. This means that the universe and nature do not govern and regulate themselves; rather they are subject to Allah's laws and function according to His will.

These very same *āyāt* and *sūrah*s were revealed over 1,400 years ago in the detached area of Arabia, the far-off region of the Hijāz, and the isolated city of Makkah. The inhabitants of that heretofore overlooked Makkah were now, via the Prophet (ﷺ), privy to the Qur'an — a book of wisdom, values, narratives, rules, admonitions, and hopes. All of this — the timing, the place, the quantity, the quality — unfolded in accordance with Allah's plan and knowledge, "...He made it [the Qur'an] accessible through His knowledge" (4:166). This advent was meant to set people on a clear conceptual course to Allah (ﷻ), to elevate their perceptual experience, and to

transform them from the creatures of nature to the subjects of the Supreme. The scattered references throughout the Qur'an to the acculturation of the human mind to the permeative doings of Allah are ample and constant,

**Verily, in that there are demonstrations from Allah for people who reason (13:4);**

**Say, "Present your evidence if you are [indeed] truthful..." (2:111).**

The Qur'an details the functioning of the universe to help establish in the human mind the centrality and incontrovertibility of Allah's authority and power. Man has to come to the conclusion that he is Allah's subordinate; therefore he has to stop acceding to the authority of those who are less than Allah (ﷻ) in his social life. The mental evidence herein serves this end. The historical and contemporary fault of societies is their demoting of deity and divinity to a ritual status where God is stripped of any notion of authority or power. This is attended by the determination to reorder His attributes in the public mind in a way that love and compassion take precedence over His authority, power, and justice. The Qur'an and the Prophet (ﷺ) came to address this destructive imbalance. This holy Writ contains all the information committed Muslims need to re-establish the ascendent authority of Allah, as well as His overwhelming power of wisdom and ultimate justice.

- (7:54) **Verily, your Sustainer is Allah, who has created the heavens and the earth in six eons, and is established on the throne of His almightiness. He covers the day with the night in swift pursuit, with the Sun and the Moon and the stars subservient to His command: oh, verily, His is all creation and all command. Hallowed is Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds!**
- (7:55) **Call unto your Sustainer humbly, and in the secrecy of your hearts. Verily, He loves not those who transgress the bounds of what is right:**

إِنْ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ  
 اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشَىٰ اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَيْثُهَا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ  
 وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ۗ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ  
 الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ اَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ  
 ﴿٥٥﴾ وَلَا تَفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا  
 إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ  
 الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَقْلَّتْ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا  
 سُقْنَاهُ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ  
 كَذَلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ  
 نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ ۗ وَالَّذِي خَبثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا ۗ كَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ  
 الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

- (7:56) Hence, do not spread corruption on earth after it has been so well ordered. And call unto Him with fear and longing: verily, Allah's grace is ever near to the doers of good!
- (7:57) And He it is who sends forth the winds as a glad tidings of His coming grace — so that, when they have brought heavy clouds, We may drive them toward dead land and cause thereby water to descend; and by this means do



We cause all manner of fruit to come forth. Even thus shall We cause the dead to come forth: [and this] you ought to keep in mind.

- (7:58) As for the good land, its vegetation comes forth [in abundance] by its Sustainer's leave, whereas from the bad it comes forth but poorly. Thus do We give many facts to Our messages for [the benefit of] people who are grateful! (al-A'rāf:54–58).

These *āyāt* speak about Allah (ﷻ). However, the human mind tends to veer off in unsustainable directions when it tries to understand God in human terms. In the whole stretch of human perception as molded by the Qur'an and the Prophet (ﷺ) there is no place for giving God a human configuration. Even outside the immediate domain of scripture, nothing in human experience can be counted on to even remotely "configure" God. The human mind, which can only draw on its material and physical experience, therefore has nothing to go on to formulate a vision of God's "self," for God is not a material or physical entity. When Allah says, "There is nothing similar to Him" (42:11) and the human mind understands what He is saying, then no imagery can evolve in that mind about the self or persona of God. And so, if the mind does not have the capacity to entertain a mental image of God, it also knows, by extension, that the way He works His will cannot be comprehended in human terms. The only thing left for the God-given human mind is to think, ponder, reflect, and mull over God's creation. Hence,

Verily, your Sustainer is Allah, who has created the heavens and the earth in six eons, and is established on the throne of His almightiness. He submerges the day with the night in swift pursuit, with the Sun and the Moon and the stars subservient to His command: oh, verily, His is all creation and all command. Hallowed is Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds! (7:54).

The human mind that is not tamed or cultured by scripture and revelation will pose such questions as, “But how did God create the heavens and the earth?” or “How did He settle on His throne?” or “What is the shape or form of this throne?” These types of questions are both vacuous and uncalled for within a scriptural Islamic frame of mind. Any self-respecting, thoughtful Muslim does not respond to such unreasonable and fatuous questions. Regrettably, this has a basis in the distant Islamic past; there were a number of people who ventured into this area beyond human comprehension, trying to answer questions pertaining to Allah (ﷻ) that no one, even prophets, is equipped to answer. Contact with Greek philosophy and other rational investigations void of scriptural guidance about life, existence, God, and the unknown may have had something to do with it, however the early Muslims, if they are to be blameworthy, should have known better.

From Allah’s words, “**...who has created the heavens and the earth in six eons,**” the question that comes to mind concerns the time period of “six days” or “six eons.” Once again, this issue is a matter that falls beyond the observational scope of man. Man was not present when this creation took place within a span of six eons or durations. So far as man knows, no animate being created by Allah (ﷻ) witnessed this act of creation, “**I [Allah] did not have them witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, as well as the creation of their selves...**” (18:51).

The divine words *sittati ayyām* (typically translated as *six days*) may refer to six divisions of geological time, to six immeasurably long periods of time, to a time period of six phases or stages, or to some other measurement of time. Obviously, the human definition of a “day” is contingent upon the Solar System; but creation evidently took place before the existence of any solar system. Anyone who tries to speak with certainty about the exact time period of these “six eons” winds up superimposing human measurements on divine actions — a task that is always unsatisfying, a non-starter. All attempts that try to fit these divine words of truth within human assumptions, hypotheses, and theories are attempts at placing God within the constraints, limitations, and failures of hu-

mans, sometimes in the name of science. There are intellectuals out there who try to do this, as they are so fascinated by science that they will disfigure the truth by subjecting it to the transience and ever-evolving “facts” of science.

*Science*, from the Latin word *scientia* for *knowledge*, is any systematic field of study or body of knowledge that aims, through experiment, observation, and deduction, to produce reliable explanation of phenomena, with reference to the material and physical world. Activities such as healing, star-watching, and engineering have been practiced in many societies since ancient times. “Pure” science, especially physics (formerly called natural philosophy), had traditionally been the main area of study for philosophers. The European Scientific Revolution between about 1650 and 1800 replaced speculative philosophy with a new combination of observation, experimentation, and rationality.

Today, scientific research involves an interaction among tradition, experiment and observation, and deduction. The subject area called philosophy of science investigates the nature of this complex interaction, and the extent of its ability to gain access to the truth about the material world. It has long been recognized that induction from observation cannot give explanations based on logic. In the 20th century, Karl Popper has described the scientific method as a rigorous experimental testing of a scientist’s ideas or hypotheses. The origin and role of these ideas, and their interdependence with observation, have been examined, for example, by the US thinker Thomas S. Kuhn, who places them in a historical and sociological setting. The sociology of science investigates how scientific theories and laws are produced, and questions the possibility of objectivity in any scientific endeavor. One controversial point of view is the replacement of scientific realism with scientific relativism, as proposed by Paul K. Feyerabend. Questions concerning the proper use of science and the role of science education are also restructuring this field of study.<sup>226</sup>

Science is divided into separate areas of study, such as astronomy, biology, geology, chemistry, physics, and mathematics, although more recently, attempts have been made to combine traditionally

separate disciplines under such headings as life sciences and earth sciences. These areas are usually jointly referred to as the natural sciences. Physics and chemistry are sometimes separated out and called the physical sciences, with mathematics left in a category of its own. The application of science for practical purposes is called technology. Social science is the systematic study of human behavior, and includes such areas as anthropology, economics, psychology, and sociology. One area of contemporary debate is whether the social-science disciplines are actually sciences; that is, whether the study of human beings is capable of scientific precision or prediction in the same way as natural science is seen to be.<sup>227</sup>

### The Vastness of the Universe Created by God

**Verily, your Sustainer is Allah, who has created the heavens and the earth in six eons, and is established on the throne of His almightiness. He covers the day with the night in swift pursuit, with the Sun and the Moon and the stars subservient to His command: oh, verily, His is all creation and all command. Hallowed is Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds! (7:54).**

This spectacular earth was created by Allah (ﷻ). But He Himself is beyond the comprehension of whatever is material and matter, planet and earth. Out of His proportion, symmetry, and correlation come the natural laws that govern this cosmos and regulate this planetary system. Night perpetually chases day — in an uninterrupted cycle, by His leave. And it is He who made the Sun, the Moon, and the planets contributors to the proper functioning of man's domain.

It is Allah (ﷻ) — the Creator, the Omnipresent, the Regulator, and the Organizer — who made all this possible, workable, and harmonious. Therefore, He is man's Sustainer as well. Only He deserves to be man's Maintainer and Nourisher, because His system is the only system that works, be it His system of the universe or His

system for man. No other creator shares in His design. As His arrangement includes human life, He should be recognized as the only source of legitimate morals and laws for mankind. The Day of Reckoning will arrive; and man will be held answerable to these pertinent issues. It was He who began creation, and it will be He who will end it. Thus, in the same manner that there can be no co-creator, there can be no rival lawmaker. The scenery of the universe brings out the majesty of Allah not for its dazzling visual display but for the extended purposes of His authority in man's personal and public life.

Many people today are city-dwellers whose view of the night sky is hindered by the bright lights of the modern metropolis. Those who are fortunate enough to get away from the "light pollution" of the city and look at the night sky from a dark place, can see thousands of stars and the faint starry band of the Milky Way meandering across the sky. Scientific information, as of now, suggests that the Milky Way Galaxy is a vast collection of more than 100 billion stars. A dark sky will also reveal the Andromeda Galaxy, an even larger star system lying beyond the boundaries of the Milky Way. Both are members of the small cluster of galaxies called the Local Group, which lies on the edge of a supercluster of galaxies. Beyond lies the vast expanse of the universe with countless more distant galaxies.<sup>228</sup>

In 1785, William Herschel, the astronomer who discovered the planet Uranus, counted stars in various directions across the sky and decided that the Sun lay near the center of a flattened disk of stars. In 1917, Harlow Shapley studied the distribution of globular clusters — clusters of hundreds of thousands of stars — and concluded that they clustered around the center of the galaxy in the direction of the constellation of Sagittarius. Herschel had been deceived by the clouds of dust that are scattered through the Milky Way, obscuring view of more distant stars.<sup>229</sup>

The modern view reveals the Milky Way to be a large spiral galaxy composed of a thin circular disk surrounding a central bulge, with a halo of stars and globular clusters. The distance from one end of the disk to the other is approximately 100,000 light-years

(that is, it would take light 100,000 years, at a rate of 299,792 km/s, to travel across the disk). Traveling as fast as the fastest spacecraft, a trip across the galaxy would take well over a billion years. The Sun lies in the disk, some 28,000 light-years from the center, completing an orbit around the central bulge every 240 million years. Around 95% of the visible mass of the galaxy is composed of stars, in particular the vast mass of faint Sun-like stars that contribute the yellowish background glow of the disk and bulge. Despite the vast numbers of stars, the interstellar distances are immense, compared with their sizes. The nearest stars to the Sun are 4.3 light-years away (40 trillion km; 25 trillion miles). Traveling on the fastest spacecraft, this trip would take some 60,000 years.<sup>230</sup>

The heart of the galaxy is a mystery being slowly unveiled by observations using radio and infrared telescopes that can pierce the veil of dust, shielding it from human observation. Astronomers suspect that it harbors a black hole with the mass of more than a million suns. The remaining mass in the galaxy is the thin interstellar medium of gas and dust lying between the stars. Most of this is compacted into dense, cold clouds of gas laced with traces of dust.<sup>231</sup>

In today's (secular) scientific understanding of the universe, it is believed that the Milky Way system originated in a vast condensation of gas, which began to form stars within a billion years of the Big Bang. Early generations of stars in this cloud included those that form the halo of stars and globular clusters surrounding the galaxy. Successive generations of stars had orbits much closer to the thin disk seen today. When the Sun emerged some 4.6 billion years ago, the galaxy was already middle aged, and would have looked much as it does today. New stars are still being born from clouds of gas. While they live, these beacons and their gaseous birthplaces trace out the spiral arms within the background glow of the disk. Individual stars will live and die, but the Milky Way will probably continue to look much as it does today for billions of years to come, long after stars such as the Sun are dead.<sup>232</sup>

The existence of galaxies other than the Milky Way was long suspected, but only became accepted in the 1920s, when Edwin Hubble measured the distance to some nearby galaxies. Galaxies

are classified according to their overall appearance, since only in the nearest ones can even the brightest stars be discerned individually. Most familiar are the spiral galaxies like the Milky Way. Photos of these galaxies reveal that they are in beautiful spiral patterns, traced out by bright stars and gas, hiding the fainter background glow of the disk in which they lie. The spiral patterns range from loosely wound S-shapes to arms so tightly wound that the spiral cannot be discerned. The Milky Way falls midway in this range. Some spirals have a distinct bar across the nucleus from which the spiral arms trail.<sup>233</sup>

Other galaxies show no apparent structure beyond a smooth spherical or elliptical shape. Unlike the spirals, these elliptical galaxies usually lack any significant signs of recent star formation or the gas to promote it. Giants of this class are rare, but are the most massive galaxies known. On the other end of the scale, the faint dwarf ellipticals, little larger than a globular star cluster, are probably the most common type of galaxy. Perhaps a quarter of all galaxies are classified as irregular because they do not fit neatly into either of these categories. They are typically faint, but with a mix of old and young stars, gas, and dust.<sup>234</sup>

Many galaxies, including the Milky Way, show signs of more mass than can readily be seen. Some galaxies hide another enigma — a central powerhouse at their core that generates narrow jets of high-energy particles streaming outward. These active galaxies are believed to be powered by matter swirling around a massive black hole. It may be that many large galaxies have a central black hole with a mass equal to millions of suns, but in most of them, as in the Milky Way, this lies dormant unless brought to life by an inflow of gas.<sup>235</sup>

Galaxies, like some stars within galaxies, tend to exist in clusters. The Milky Ways' Local Group is a small cluster, with 30 or so members, most of them small elliptical or irregular galaxies. The nearest large cluster of galaxies is the Virgo cluster, with some 2,500 members, lying about 60,000 million light-years away. The Virgo cluster is a major component of the Local Supercluster. Compared with the amount of space between the stars, galaxies in these

clusters are relatively close together. As a result of this proximity, they sometimes run into one another, causing cosmic fireworks. The stars within the galaxies almost never collide, but the tenuous interstellar clouds crash together and form new stars, changing the appearance of the galaxy and possibly triggering the nuclear powerhouse into activity.<sup>236</sup>

The more man looks at, observes, and monitors the sky, the more he will appreciate the act of creation — given that he maintains the proper state of mind. Due to some advancements, the exploration of space has become more accessible than has been the case in past human history. Before the telescope, astronomy consisted largely of measuring and predicting the positions of stars and planets observable by eye. With the still scant historical information about the Muslim contribution to this field of knowledge, in 1609 a qualitative move forward began when Galileo Galilei used a telescope to reveal mountains on the Moon, Jupiter's moons, and countless stars in the Milky Way. Despite these amazing discoveries, however, for the next 250 years astronomy was predominantly devoted to measuring positions and cataloging.<sup>237</sup>

Almost 150 years ago, the first identification of a chemical element in the Sun was made using a spectrograph, which separates sunlight into its component colors. This marked the start of the scientific ability to deduce the composition of the stars, also known as the science of astrophysics. Today, spectrographs are used on optical telescopes hundreds of times the size of Galileo's first instruments. One of these, the Hubble Space Telescope, views the sky from above the distorting effect of Earth's atmosphere. Optical telescopes joined by radio telescopes on the ground and in space can be used to form large radio arrays. Other observatories in space search for sources of infrared and ultraviolet light, X-rays, and gamma rays.<sup>238</sup>

The following six points summarize what has been covered about this far-reaching universe through the lens of these *āyāt*,

1. Allah (ﷻ), and only Allah, is the Creator, with no other(s) participating in this divine act and accomplishment. He created the heavens and the earth; knowing this puts man, who



- lives and thrives within Allah's physical and material system, in a position of dependency upon Him.
2. Allah (ﷻ) settled on the throne or chair of state. Understanding the "throne" and "settled on" in human terms does not help in comprehending "how" or "where" this could happen. Though the meanings of these words and terms as applied to humans are understood, the "motion" or the "location" when it applies to Allah cannot be. Some learned scholars explain the meaning of "throne" as *dominance* or *power*.
  3. Night and day are sequential; this is indicative of the earth being spherical. And human understanding improves as its body of knowledge increases and grows.
  4. The Sun, the Moon, and all planets and stars were created by Allah (ﷻ); their creation was meant to contribute to the well-being of human life, and, hence, they are not some distant objects that are unrelated to the progress and improvement of man's quality of living.
  5. If Allah (ﷻ) creates, then He also commands. Acknowledging God's creative power while denying Him His authority has been the main deviation in societies and civilizations from the beginning of time.
  6. Allah (ﷻ) in His glory is above and beyond the trivial and indifferent designations of man. His is the resplendency and His is the praise, **"Hallowed is Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds!"**

## The Etiquette of *Du'ā'*

**Call unto your Sustainer humbly, and in the secrecy of your hearts. Verily, He loves not those who transgress [and aggress]: and do not mismanage the world's [affairs] after its orderliness. And call upon Him with fear and longing: verily, Allah's grace is ever near the perfecters [of deeds] (7:55–56).**

Asking Allah (ﷻ) should come from a meek personality, a modest person, and a humble human. Man should realize that when he is sincerely speaking to the Almighty — He listens. The “interaction” with Allah is contingent upon the mannerism and moral character of the person in need of Him. Arrogance, haughty tones, or otherwise offensive manners will not spark the interest of God. One of the features of committed Muslims is that they always ask Allah, because there is never a time or place when they are not in need of Him. If they need anything, they work for it with all the wherewithal they have, but if working for it does not get them what they want, then they earnestly turn to Allah for aid and assistance by “speaking” to Him. Committed Muslims are advised to always speak to Allah, to call upon Him and feel His presence — and to never tire of it. But in doing so, they are required to be humble and deferential, submissive and modest; and to call on Him with soft (low) voices, in other words, the voice of conscience.

Allah (ﷻ) has taught man how to approach Him, how to ask Him, and how to appeal earnestly to Him, “**Call unto your Sustainer meekly, and in private.**” This “speaking relationship” with Allah promotes a worldly well-being and a post-worldly effulgence. He is man's Sustainer, the Manager of his larger affairs, and the Provider of everything he needs; therefore who better to respond when man calls. This appealing to Allah lies at the core of *'ibādah* (conformity to Him). Concealing this entreaty and prayer (*du'ā'*) repels shallowness and diminishes mendacity. Another *āyah* in this cultivating Qur'an bears out this meaning, “**And from the inside of yourself be conscious of your Sustainer when you call upon Him**

**and when you fear Him” (7:205).** And when Allah acclaims the Prophet Zakariyā (ﷺ), He says, **“As he [Zakariyā] called upon his Sustainer with a concealed appeal” (19:3).** There are also statements from the Prophet (ﷺ) to substantiate this point. At one time people raised their voices when calling upon Allah, to which the Prophet said,

*O People! Relax! For you do not call upon a deaf [God] or an absent One. You call upon an ever-hearing and ever-present [God]; and He remains with you.*<sup>239</sup>

In another hadith, he is known to have said, *“A prayer/appeal in privacy is equal to seventy prayers/appeals in the open.”*<sup>240</sup>

**“Verily, He loves not those who are offenders.”** This applies whether they offend in the way they speak to Him or in any other manner. In this context, those who dispense with humility and privacy when asking Him are offenders. Hence, those who “act out” their *du‘ā’s* for public display, preferring public recognition to Allah’s embrace, cannot expect His love. Another hadith puts it this way.

*“There will come people who will be offensive in their du‘ā’.”* And then he read the *āyah*, **“Call unto your Sustainer with humility and in secrecy...”** *“It is enough to say, ‘O Allah! I ask You for Paradise and for every expression and effort that brings it near; and I seek Your refuge from the Fire and every expression and effort that brings it near.’”*<sup>241</sup>

After this lesson on how to appeal to Him, as if to correlate two issues with each other, Allah (ﷻ) reproves the act of social decay and worldly regression, **“Hence, do not cause impairment to spread on earth...”** Prophets come and set, or try to set, people and societies on a straight course to Allah, and after their heroic accomplishment, some people endeavor to turn the clock back to the days of vice, degradation, and criminality. This regressive practice, called *ifsād*, takes many forms, inclusive of, but not limited to, the

corruption of scripture or its loss; societies that are overwhelmed with crime and growing rates of murder and homicide; a creeping movement by the wealthy class to virtually monopolize money and possessions via financial and economic instruments of theft and fraud; and the dumbing down of society by the proliferation of drugs, alcohol, narcotics, and sex.

If only people could open their eyes and have receptive minds they would understand how much they really need Allah (ﷻ). Thus, they would be desperate to call upon Him in fear of the consequences that await them in this world, and in an ambition to help them change course before it is too late. They would want Allah to be on their side so that they can avoid disaster and the inescapable social laws that are at work in accordance with His will, not theirs. Allah should be called upon in fear of His punishment and in anticipation of His rewards. Save for Allah's mercy-intervention in response to his subjects' entreaties, there is no way out of hundreds of years of a well-established deviation and a systemic hell that will self-destruct with all the human beings in it, **"Allah's grace is ever-near the seekers of high standards."** It takes a heart's depth of sincerity to pull out of the cumulative mess of generations, but even that would not be enough as only Allah's benevolence and seemliness carry the day,

**And My mercy has accommodated everything; I will then ascribe it to those who are mindful of My power presence [in worldly life] and who institutionalize the *zakāh*, and who are committed to Our pronounced power presence (7:156).**

From the above, *du'ā'* is a necessity and an obligation. It goes to re-inforce the inferior position of man relative to Allah's superior one.

The *du'ā'* has its mannerisms and characteristics. It should be pronounced with awe and reverence; and be concealed and not "showcased." The supplicator should be in a state between fear of Allah's punishment and a yearning for His compensation, **"And they call upon Us in fondness and in awe" (21:90).** Some

scholars say that the fear of Allah (ﷻ) should dominate in the conscience of one wishing for Him; however, when he approaches the hour of death, then his fondness for Him should dominate. A hadith corroborates this position, “None of you shall die except in a state of having confidence in Allah’s grace.”<sup>242</sup>

The *du‘ā’* should not contain any element or suggestion of aggression, such as yelling or shouting. The request to become a prophet is not a permissible *du‘ā’*. Similarly, praying for the impossible, for instance, the Sun colliding with the Earth, is not permitted. No *du‘ā’* can ever include what amounts to disobedience of Allah (ﷻ). Some of the details pertaining to the “mechanics” of *du‘ā’* include:

1. the person should be *ṭāhir* (in a state of bio-purity);
2. the person should face toward the *qiblah*;
3. the heart should be cleared of any distractions or obsessions;
4. the *du‘ā’* should begin and end with the invocation of the *ṣalāh* upon the Prophet (ﷺ);
5. the hands should be extended skyward;<sup>243</sup>
6. other committed Muslims should be included in the *du‘ā’*; and
7. appropriate and conducive times should be sought out, such as the last third of nighttime, the time of breaking the fast, Friday, during travel, and whenever there is injustice and oppression.

The vast majority of Muslims consider all of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* to be a *du‘ā’*, and so with regard to the *āyah* being discussed — particular emphasis being placed on humility and “the secrecy of your hearts” — some Muslim scholars have said that the word *āmīn* at the end of the recitation of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* should be said silently.

Even though there are differences among Islamic scholars about where the hands should be during *du‘ā’*, it is said that the companions and first generation Muslims did raise their hands skyward. In *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, it is mentioned on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī that the Prophet (ﷺ) expressed a *du‘ā’* as he extended his hands upward. Anas ibn Mālīk also narrated a hadith with this meaning. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar said that the Prophet

raised his hands and said, “O Allah! I absolve myself to You from what Khālīd has done.”<sup>244</sup> ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said,

On the day of Badr, the Prophet looked at the *mushriks* who were a thousand while his companions were 317. Then the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) faced toward the *qiblah*, extending his hands, and called upon his Sustainer.<sup>245</sup> And he did not finish his *du‘ā’* until he passed his hands over his face.<sup>246</sup>

### The Wind and the Rain Allude to God’s Grace Upon Man

**And He it is who sends forth the winds as a glad tidings of His coming grace — so that, when they have brought heavy clouds, We may drive them toward dead land and cause thereby water to descend; and by this means do We cause all manner of fruit to come forth. Even thus shall We cause the dead to come forth: [and this] you ought to keep in mind. As for the good land, its vegetation comes forth [in abundance] by its Sustainer’s leave, whereas from the bad it comes forth but poorly. Thus do We give many facts to our messages for [the benefit of] people who are grateful! (7:57–58).**

These *āyāt* indicate that it is Allah (ﷻ) who is in control of the winds, which are the harbinger of coming rain in some cases. Meteorological information defines the wind as the lateral movement of the Earth’s atmosphere from high- to low-pressure areas. Although modified by features such as land and water, there is a basic worldwide system of trade winds, westerlies, monsoons, and others.

A belt of low pressure (the doldrums) lives along the equator. The trade winds blow toward this from the horse latitudes (areas of high pressure at about 30° north and south of the equator), blowing from the northeast in the northern hemisphere, and from the southeast in the southern. Trade winds are caused by hot air rising

at the equator and the consequent movement of air from north and south to take its place. The winds are deflected toward the west because of the Earth's west-to-east rotation. The unpredictable calms known as the doldrums lie at their convergence. The doldrums are characterized by calm or very light westerly winds, during which there may be sudden squalls and stormy weather. For this reason the areas are avoided as far as possible by sailing ships. The trade-wind belts move north and south about  $5^\circ$  with the seasons. The name is derived from the obsolete expression "to blow trade" meaning *consistently in a constant direction*, which indicates the trade winds' importance to navigation in the days of cargo-carrying sailing ships.<sup>247</sup>

The westerlies (also from the horse latitudes) are prevailing winds from the west that occur in both hemispheres between latitudes of about  $35^\circ$  and  $60^\circ$ ; they blow north of the equator from the southwest and south of the equator from the northwest, bringing moist weather to the west coast of the landmasses in these latitudes. Unlike the trade winds, they are much more variable and produce stormy weather.<sup>248</sup>

The monsoon wind system is a system that dominates the climate of a wide region, with seasonal reversals of direction; in particular, the wind in south Asia blows toward the sea in winter (from the northeast) and toward the land in summer (from the southwest), bringing heavy rain. The monsoon may cause destructive flooding all over India and southeast Asia from April to September; thousands of people are rendered homeless each year. The Guinea monsoon is a southwesterly wind that blows in west Africa from April to September, throughout the rainy season.<sup>249</sup>

Cold winds blow outward from high-pressure areas at the poles. More local effects result from landmasses heating and cooling faster than the adjacent sea, producing onshore winds in the daytime and offshore winds at night. The dry northerly bise (Switzerland) and the mistral, which strikes the Mediterranean area of France during winter, are unpleasantly cold, dry winds. They have been known to reach a velocity of 90 miles/hr (145 km/hr).<sup>250</sup>

Famous or notorious warm winds include the chinook (Native American for *snow-eater*) over the eastern Rocky Mountains, North

America. Often occurring in winter and spring when it produces a rapid thaw, thereby being important to the agriculture of the area, it is a warm dry wind that blows downhill on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains. A second warm wind is the *fohn* of Europe's Alpine valleys, a warm dry wind that blows down the leeward slopes of mountains. The air heats up as it descends because of the increase in pressure, and it is dry because all the moisture was dropped on the windward side of the mountain. In the valleys of Switzerland it is regarded as a health hazard, producing migraines and high blood pressure. A third one is the *sirocco* in Italy, a hot, normally dry and dust-laden wind that blows from the deserts of north Africa across the Mediterranean into southern Europe. It occurs mainly in the spring. The name *sirocco* is also applied to any hot oppressive wind. In Egypt, the *sirocco* goes by the name *Khamsin*; it is a hot southeasterly wind that blows from the Sahara desert over Egypt and parts of the Muslim East from late March to May or June. In colonized Palestine, this warm wind is called *sharav*; it is a spring wind that brings warm air from the Sahara and Arabian deserts across the Mediterranean. Then there is the *Santa Ana*, a periodic warm wind from the inland deserts that strikes the California coast.<sup>251</sup>

In the context of this final Scripture, these human observations are less about how a “high pressure” or “low pressure” atmospheric condition explains the direction, velocity, or location of the wind — even though such factors in addition to mountains, seas, and deserts are certainly an explanation for the “mechanics” of wind flow — than about the fact that it is Allah (ﷻ) who controls, commands, and contains this phenomenon.

Along the same lines, scientific observations illustrate that rain is a form of precipitation in which separate drops of water fall to the Earth's surface from clouds. The drops are formed by the accumulation of fine droplets that condense from water vapor in the air. Condensation is usually brought about by rising and subsequent cooling of air. Rain can form in three main ways: frontal (or cyclonic) rainfall, orographic (or relief) rainfall, and convectional rainfall. Frontal rainfall takes place at the boundary, or front, between a mass of warm air from the tropics and a mass of cold air



from the poles. The water vapor in the warm air is chilled and condenses to form clouds and rain.<sup>252</sup>

Orographic rainfall occurs when an airstream is forced to rise over a mountain range. The air becomes cooled and precipitation takes place. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Pennine hills, which extend southward from Northumbria to Derbyshire in north England, interrupt the path of the prevailing southwesterly winds, causing orographic rainfall. Their presence is partly responsible for the western side of the UK being wetter than the eastern. The orographic effect can sometimes occur in large cities, when air rises over tall buildings. Convictional rainfall, associated with hot climates, is brought about by rising and abrupt cooling of air that has been warmed by the extreme heat of the ground surface. The water vapor carried by the air condenses and so rain falls heavily. Convictional rainfall is usually accompanied by thunderstorms.<sup>253</sup>

For those who have not been blinded by “scientific secularism,” the winds and the rain are an expression of Allah’s grace and dexterity, “**As good news of His coming grace.**” Other Qur’anic *āyāt* on this matter only serve to emphasize the point,

**Behold, then, [O man], these signs of Allah’s grace — how He gives life to the earth after it had been lifeless! Verily, this Selfsame [God] is indeed the one who can bring the dead back to life: for He has the power to will anything! (30:50);**

**And it is He who sends down rain after [men] have lost all hope, and unfolds His grace [thereby]: for He alone is [their] Protector, the One to whom all praise is due (42:28).**

It is according to Allah’s program and supervision that dead land is “resurrected” to come back to life,

**And [yet], they have a sign [of Our power to create and to resurrect] in the lifeless earth that We make**

**alive, and out of which We bring forth grain, whereof they may eat (36:33).**

The thinking patterns of today's dominant and predatory power culture lack an understanding of (or intentionally disregard) the connection between man's social laws and nature's physical laws. The readers of this Qur'an cannot fail to see, despite the prevailing secular and non-scriptural public opinion, that there is a "cause and effect" relationship between the social laws and practices of human societies and the physical or "natural" consequences thereof. That precipitation and drought are tied into the lives of civilizations and societies should come out of a reading of the following *āyah*,

**And [remember], it is Allah who sends forth the winds, so that they raise a cloud, whereupon We drive it toward dead land and thereby give life to the earth after it had been lifeless: even thus shall resurrection be! (35:9).**

The collective and cumulative lives of civilizations and societies affect atmospheric and climatic changes — within a timeframe determined by almighty Allah (ﷻ).

Major decisions and sweeping policies have been enacted in times past by societies and civilizations to secure the cultivation of crops and the keeping of domesticated animals for food, fiber, or power. Settled agriculture enabled primitive people, who depended on hunting, fishing, and gathering, to live in communities, which could then grow as their agricultural productivity grew. This was aided by the development of such implements as plows, hoes, and sickles; and in drier countries by the construction of irrigation systems.

The current political elites have taken many things for granted, the most devastating of which is their utter disregard for God, who controls and commands nature. For many years, the barons and chief executives of the industrial and money-making

complex in Euro-America has relied on a weather system that they think has nothing to do with their economic, social, and financial structures. The agricultural pattern that was pursuant to or accompanied their Renaissance and Enlightenment witnessed a series of changes in farming practice as one example. Some historians date these as far back as the end of the 16th century CE, but the radicalization of some agricultural practices usually covers the period 1700–1850. The main changes included greater intensity of productive land use; the reduction of fallow land and wastelands; the introduction of crop rotation; the development of artificial grasses; and scientific animal breeding. Many such changes were facilitated by the replacement of open fields with enclosures. They also depended upon tenant farming and market production replacing subsistence and peasant agriculture. The widespread use of mechanized farming techniques, such as threshing machines and mechanical plows, mostly post-dated the changes of this agricultural revolution.<sup>254</sup>

But who is to say, or who will guarantee that the current weather trends are going to continue? Man is involved in a continual scramble against disaster, both those, such as earthquakes or floods, that are due to the natural environment and those, like war and persecution, that spring from his own nature. Human decision-making on the secular, *laissez-faire* capitalistic model has been degenerating from worrisome to troublesome to irresponsible. It does not recognize God as the authority on nature as it also disputes His authority over man.

As cited above, scientific observations indicate that temperature has a lot to do with worldwide wind systems. Burning fossil fuel releases large quantities of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) that, with other gasses, traps heat in the atmosphere, thereby causing a slow increase in global temperatures. This “greenhouse effect” could have disastrous consequences: widespread crop failures and flooding of population centers. Which countries, therefore, are generating the most CO<sub>2</sub> from fossil fuel, and how should they be held more accountable? The burning of tropical rain forests releases yet more CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere; this is just one of many problems of deforestation. Where, though, are these forests being cut down or dying? And for

what reason? The meager environment on the fringes of the world's deserts is being destroyed by over-grazing and deforestation. Where exactly are these areas of desertification as they pose serious and life-threatening consequences? Acid rain, the product of industrial emissions of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, is a major contributor to forest destruction and water pollution in the northern hemisphere. Are these areas of great atmospheric acidity in the industrialized countries of the north? And if they are, why?

This "development" — due to wrong human decisions and disregard for other peoples and societies — comes out of the insatiable desire to increase profits and expand consumer markets. In reality, over the more immediate consequential stretch of time, this so-called human "development" more likely resembles a counter-development. Voices, even from within this materialistic system, are sounding the alarm bells on the greenhouse effect, global climate change, and depletion of the ozone layer.

The greenhouse effect in the Earth's atmosphere is defined as the trapping of solar radiation, which, absorbed by the Earth and re-emitted from the surface, is prevented from escaping by various gases in the air. The result is a rise in the Earth's overall temperature; in a garden greenhouse, the glass walls have the same effect. The main greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, methane, and chlorofluorocarbons; water vapor is another greenhouse gas. Fossil fuel consumption and forest fires are the main causes of carbon dioxide buildup; methane is a byproduct of agriculture (rice, cattle, sheep). The United Nations Environment Program estimated many years ago an increase in average world temperatures of 2.7 °F (1.5 °C) with a consequent rise of 7.7 in (20 cm) in sea level by 2025.<sup>255</sup>

The concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is estimated to have risen by 25% since the Industrial Revolution, and more than 10% since 1950; the rate of increase is now over 0.5%/yr. Chlorofluorocarbon levels are rising by 5%/yr, and nitrous oxide levels by 0.4%/yr, resulting in a global warming effect of over 0.5% since the early-20th century, and a rise of about 3 °F and 0.1 °F/yr in the temperature of the world's oceans during the 1980s alone. Arctic ice was 20–23 ft (6–7 m) thick in 1976 and had reduced to 13–17 ft

(4–5 m) by 1987. Low-lying areas and entire countries are threatened by flooding, and crops will be affected by the change in climate. Dubbed the “greenhouse effect” by Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius (1859–1927), it was first predicted in 1827 by French mathematician Joseph Fourier (1768–1830).<sup>256</sup>

The telltale signs are all around: the greed, selfishness, and oppression of man toward fellow man and nature is taking its toll on the God-calibrated balance of life, existence, and the world. The self-important and stuck-up conduct of political policies and social systems alienated from God have led man into a dark wilderness that is getting yet darker. The establishments and governments who are calling the shots refuse to affirm God as Sustainer of life, man, and society. They think that God resurrecting man in a manner similar to a plant coming out of the ground is crazy.

This Qur'an is the living matter of a committed Muslim: it brings him to life — just like water seeping into fertile lands to sprout plants and germinate vegetation. On the other hand, God-deniers are like lands of drought: they have no livelihood or vitality to produce,

**As for the bearing land, its vegetation comes forth [in abundance] by its Sustainer's permission, whereas from the impotent it comes forth poorly. Thus do We give many facts to Our messages for [the benefit of] people who are thankful (7:58).**

Allah (ﷻ) presents man with narratives, parables, and short moral stories that are not above any normal intelligence; this Book from Heaven has been made accessible to everyone. Therefore, no one can be excused for not understanding the Qur'an. On the contrary, everyone can relate to these words because they are meant for all and sundry. What remains is the action that springs from understanding and following it.

## Prophets Are the Consummate Agents of Change

This lesson provides an overview of previous civilizations and cultures that “went under” because their cumulative social incompatibility with Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophets (ﷺ) triggered natural upheavals leading to the destruction of their very existence. Such is the history of *imān* and its prophetic bearers. The understanding of this lesson, and similar lessons in this most reliable Registry of events (the Qur’an) places committed Muslims at the forefront of history, with the flow of Allah’s will. Through these *āyāt*, they are witnesses to the collapse of cultures and the devastation of civilizations.

Human history is indeed complex and complicated; human nature more so. Detecting the will of Allah (ﷻ) in this maze of ramifications and distractions cannot possibly be done by man alone. He needs help; he needs to know what causes science to go wrong and technologies to fail. Man’s bio-composition consists of complicated and related parts: there is the soil or earth component; there is Allah’s *nafkhaḥ* (puff) — out of which the soil becomes a lively human body; and then there are the movements and effects of this complex composition that are hard to trace with even one single individual, let alone the combined effort and movement of millions and millions of such individuals who make up the societies throughout history — with their civilizations and advanced state of development. Out of all this, the most important piece in the life of an individual or the life of a society is his/its relationship with Allah. Nothing else comes close to the meaning and significance of this God to man relationship and vice versa. As important as this fact is, it goes unreported and ignored in the information world of the powerful and the “persuasive.”

Allah (ﷻ) has a will. He also has His calculations, so to speak. He is powerful and dominant. There are worlds, domains, and spheres of reality in which Allah is the affirmed Supreme, such as the world of angels and the sphere of paradise. Even in the domain of man’s arch enemy — Satan and his likes — He is acknowledged, but opposed. But then there is that domain of neither undisputed affirmation or absolute opposition to the divine authority of Allah.

This is the world, domain, and realm of human life and all the social and physical laws that attain to it. And so Allah also interacts with these human beings within the reality of their individual lifespan as well as their social historical scope. This tiny finite mortal would have been nothing were it not for Allah giving him honor.

From this converging and diverging flow of human acquiescence and insurrection pertaining to Allah (ﷻ) has emerged what now exists, or does not exist of what man should have had. History, even though no one in a material-centric establishment will acknowledge it, evolves and derives from this much ignored fact: man's assent to or dissent away from Allah. Fundamentally, man's situation consists of a clash between a segment of people that affirms Allah's power and a counter-segment that accedes to physical and material power — as in today's "superpower" clusters of militaries and national interests. In this milieu, there are those who will hold tightly to their relationship with Allah against all temporal odds, until He determines the outcome, be it personal death and destruction, or the annihilation of the counter-civilization and its institutions.

- (7:59) **Indeed, We sent forth Nūḥ to his people, and he said, "O my people! Conform to Allah alone: you have no deity/authority other than Him. Verily, I fear lest suffering befall you on an awesome Day!"**
- (7:60) **The great ones among his people replied, "Verily, we see that you are obviously lost in error!"**
- (7:61) **Said [Nūḥ], "O my people! There is no error in me, but I am an apostle from the Sustainer of all the worlds.**
- (7:62) **"I am delivering to you my Sustainer's messages and giving you good advice: for I know [through revelation] from Allah what you do not know.**
- (7:63) **"Why, do you deem it strange that a tidings from your Sustainer should have come to you through a man from among yourselves, so that he might warn you, and that you might become conscious of Allah [concerning His power], and that you might be graced with His mercy?"**

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَتَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنِّي إِلَهٍ  
غَيْرُهُ ۗ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِن  
قَوْمِهِ ۗ إِنَّا لَنَرُّكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالَ يَتَقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَالَةٌ  
وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنْصَحُ  
لَكُمْ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ أَوْعَجِبْتُمْ أَن جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ  
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَلِتَتَّقُوا وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾  
فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَجْبَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا  
بِآيَاتِنَا ۗ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا عَمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَإِلَىٰ عَادِ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ  
يَتَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنِّي إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ  
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَوْمِهِ ۗ إِنَّا لَنَرُّكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا لَنَظُنُّكَ  
مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالَ يَتَقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ  
مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ  
﴿٦٨﴾ أَوْعَجِبْتُمْ أَن جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ  
لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِن بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَزَادَكُمْ  
فِي الْخَلْقِ بَصْطَةً ۗ فَأذْكُرُوا ۗ الْآءَ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوا



أُحِثَّتَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ، وَنَدَّرَ مَا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا فَأَنَّا بِمَا  
 تَعْدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ  
 رَبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَعَظْبٌ مُّهِمٌّ أَتَجِدِلُونَنِي فِي أَسْمَاءِ سَمَيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ  
 وَءَابَاؤُكُمْ مَا نَزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ فَأَنْظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ  
 الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَقَطَعْنَا دَابِرَ  
 الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَمَا كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ  
 صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ  
 جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ  
 فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابُ  
 الْيَوْمِ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَادْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءً مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَبَوَّأَكُمْ فِي  
 الْأَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْ سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا وَتَنْجُونَ الْجِبَالَ بِيوتًا  
 فَادْكُرُوا ءَالَآءَ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ  
 الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعِفُوا لِمَنْ  
 ءَامَنَ مِنْهُمْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ صَالِحًا مُّرْسَلٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا  
 أُرْسِلَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا بِالَّذِي

ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ، كَفَرُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَعَقَرُوا التَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ  
وَقَالُوا يَنْصَلِحُ اتِّتْنَا بِمَا تَعَدْنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾  
فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جِثْمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ  
وَقَالَ يُقَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا  
تُحِبُّونَ النَّصِيحَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَوْ طَآ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ ؕ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَحِشَةَ مَا  
سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ  
شَهْوَةً مِّن دُونِ النِّسَاءِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَمَا  
كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ ؕ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّن قَرِيْبِكُمْ  
إِنَّهُمْ أَنَاسٌ يَنْظَهُرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ ؕ إِلَّا أَمْرَاتَهُ كَانَتْ  
مِنَ الْعَاْرِبِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا ط فَأَنْظَرَ كَيْفَ كَانَ  
عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ط قَالَ يُقَوْمِ  
أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرُهُ ط قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ  
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ط فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا  
النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ط  
ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَلَا تَقْعُدُوا

بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوعِدُونَ وَتَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ  
 بِهِ وَتَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيلًا  
 فَكَثَرَكُمْ ۗ وَأَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَإِنْ  
 كَانَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ ءَامَنُوا بِالَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِءِ وَطَآئِفَةٌ لَّمْ  
 يُؤْمِنُوا فَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّىٰ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَنَا وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ قَالَ  
 الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِن قَوْمِهِ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكَ يَشْعِيبُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَكَ  
 مِن قَرْيِنَا أَوْ لَنَعُودَنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا قَالَ أُولَٰئِكَ كَرِهِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ قَدْ أَفْتَرْنَا عَلَى  
 اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ نَجَّيْنَا اللَّهُ مِنهَا وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ  
 نَعُودَ فِيهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا عَلَى اللَّهِ  
 تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾  
 وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَوْمِهِ لَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتُمْ شُعَيْبًا إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا لَّخَسِرُونَ  
 ﴿٩٠﴾ فَأَخَذْتُمُ الرِّجْفَ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَثِيمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ الَّذِينَ  
 كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَأَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا هُمُ  
 الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَنَوَلَّىٰ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَاقَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَتِ  
 رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ فَكَيْفَ ءَاسَىٰ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

- (7:64) And yet they gave him the lie! And so We saved him and those who stood by him, in the ark, the while We caused those who had given the lie to Our messages to drown: verily, they were blind folk!
- (7:65) And to [the tribe/nation of] ‘Ād [We sent] their brother Hūd. He said, “O my people! Conform to Allah alone: you have no deity/authority other than Him. Will you not, then, be on guard [concerning His power presence in this world]?”
- (7:66) Said the great ones among his people, who refused to acknowledge the truth, “Verily, we see that you are weak-minded; and, verily, we think that you are a liar!”
- (7:67) Said [Hūd], “O my people! There is no weak-mindedness in me, but I am an apostle from the Sustainer of all the worlds.
- (7:68) “I am delivering to you my Sustainer’s messages and advising you truly and well.
- (7:69) “Why, do you deem it strange that a tidings from your Sustainer should have come to you through a man from among yourselves, so that he might warn you? Do but remember how He made you heirs to Nūḥ’s people, and endowed you abundantly with power: remember, then, Allah’s blessings, so that you might be successful!”
- (7:70) They answered, “Have you come to us [with the demand] that we conform to Allah alone, and give up all that our forefathers were wont to revere? Bring about, then, that [punishment] with which you have threatened us, if you are a man of truth!”
- (7:71) Said [Hūd], “You are already beset by loathsome evil and by your Sustainer’s condemnation! Do you argue with me about the [empty] names you have invented — you and your forefathers — for which Allah has bestowed no warrant from on high? Wait, then, [for what will happen]: verily, I shall wait with you!”
- (7:72) And so, by Our grace, We saved him and those who stood by him, the while We wiped out the last remnant of

- those who gave the lie to Our messages and would not commit themselves [to Us].
- (7:73) And to [the tribe of] Thamūd [We sent] their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said, “O my people! Conform to Allah alone: you have no deity/authority other than Him. Clear evidence of the truth has now come to you from your Sustainer. This she-camel belonging to Allah shall be a token for you: so leave her alone to pasture on Allah’s earth, and do her no harm, lest grievous chastisement befall you.
  - (7:74) “And remember how He made you heirs to [the tribe of] Ād and settled you firmly on earth, so that you [are able to] build for yourselves castles on its plains and hew out mountains [to serve you] as dwellings: remember, then, Allah’s blessings, and do not act wickedly on earth by spreading corruption.”
  - (7:75) The great ones among his people, who gloried in their arrogance toward all who were deemed weak, said to the committed [faithful] among them, “Do you [really] know that Ṣāliḥ has been sent by his Sustainer?” They answered, “Verily, we believe in and commit ourselves to the message he bears.”
  - (7:76) [But] the arrogant ones said, “Behold, what you have come to commit to we refuse to regard as true!”
  - (7:77) And then they cruelly slaughtered the she-camel, and turned with disdain from their Sustainer’s commandment, and said, “O Ṣāliḥ! Bring about that [punishment] with which you have threatened us, if you are truly one of Allah’s message-bearers!”
  - (7:78) Thereupon an earthquake overtook them: and then they lay lifeless, in their very homes, on the ground.
  - (7:79) And [Ṣāliḥ] turned away from them, and said, “O my people! Indeed, I delivered to you my Sustainer’s message and gave you good advice, but you did not love those who gave [you] good advice.”
  - (7:80) And [remember] Lūṭ, when he said to his people, “Will you commit abominations such as none in all the world has ever done before you?”

- (7:81) “Verily, with lust you approach men instead of women: no, but you are people given to excesses!”
- (7:82) But his people’s only answer was this, “Expel them from your land! Verily, they are folk who make themselves out to be pure!”
- (7:83) Thereupon We saved him and his household, except his wife, who was among those who stayed behind,
- (7:84) The while We rained a rain [of destruction] upon the others: and behold what happened in the end to those people lost in sin!
- (7:85) And to [the people of] Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu‘ayb. He said, “O my people! Conform unto Allah alone: you have no deity/authority other than Him. Clear evidence of the truth has now come to you from your Sustainer. Give, therefore, full measure and weight [in all your dealings], and do not deprive people of what is rightfully theirs; and do not spread corruption on earth after it has been so well ordered: [all] this is for your own good, if you would but commit [to Allah].
- (7:86) “And do not lie in ambush by every road [that leads to the truth], threatening and trying to turn away from Allah’s path all who have committed to Him, and trying to make it appear crooked. And remember [the time] when you were few, and [how] He made you many: and behold what happened in the end to the spreaders of corruption!
- (7:87) “And if there be some among you who have come to believe [and commit] to the message I bear, the while the others do not [similarly] believe, then have patience in adversity until Allah shall judge between us [and them]: for He is the best of all judges!”
- (7:88) Said the great ones among his people, who gloried in their arrogance, “Most certainly, O Shu‘ayb, we shall expel you and your fellow commitment-bearers from our land, unless you indeed return to our ways!” Said [Shu‘ayb], “Why, even though we abhor [them]?”

- (7:89) “We should be guilty of blaspheming against Allah were we to return to your ways after Allah has saved us from them! It is not conceivable that we should return to them — unless Allah, our Sustainer, so wills. All things does our Sustainer embrace within His knowledge; in Allah do we place our trust. O our Sustainer! Lay You open the truth between us and our people — for You are the best of all to lay open the truth!”
- (7:90) But the great ones among his people, who were bent on denying the truth, said [to his followers], “Indeed, if you follow Shu‘ayb, you will, verily, be the losers!”
- (7:91) Thereupon an earthquake overtook them: and then they lay lifeless, in their very homes, on the ground —
- (7:92) They who had given the lie to Shu‘ayb — as though they had never lived there: they who had given the lie to Shu‘ayb — it was they who were the losers!
- (7:93) And he turned away from them, and said, “O my people! Indeed, I delivered to you my Sustainer’s messages and gave you good advice: how, then, could I mourn for people who have denied the truth?” (al-A'rāf:59–93).

Economic history concerns the study of economies and forms of wealth-creation in past societies. Such work tended to appear as subordinate parts of predominantly political accounts, especially in Britain, until the early-20th century, when departments of economic history began to appear in universities in the interwar period (between WWI and WWII). Most of the subject was “empirically” based, but after around 1950 more attention was paid to prevalent economic theory, especially in the wake of Keynesian analyses, as a means of directing historical inquiry. Sub-specialization research categories included agricultural history and business history. Yet all this “knowledge and experience” deliberately omits the human pulse that lurks behind the economic beast in human nature.<sup>257</sup>

Just a generation ago, universities were inundated with the perception of history informed by Marxist theories or historical materialism, concentrating on material factors as the primary agents of

change. In most guises, such explanations stress the crucial importance of economic factors. Orthodox Marxist histories were rooted in studies of interaction between the “economic base” and the “political superstructure.” In recent years, uniform interpretations of this type have been in retreat, with Marxist historians offering broader interpretations of materialism, which encompass cultural factors and social interaction. Critics of historical materialism argue that its emphasis on economic causation oversimplifies and distorts the complex factors making for change. And this approach, too, excludes the reality of Allah’s power and how He relates to the facts on the ground, the facts about human nature, the facts about past civilizations, and the facts about the “here and now” of human societies.<sup>258</sup>

Another partial understanding of history is an approach to the study of history, dating from the work of Hegel, who argued that all epochs are characterized by a certain “spirit,” culture, or *zeitgeist*. The most notable practitioner of this brand of history was Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897), who was influenced by Hegelian historical thought and whose influential book *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (*The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*) appeared in 1860. In later generations the Burckhardt approach fragmented into the more limited fields of the history of art, intellectual history, and the history of science; but more recently there has been a return to cultural history, including the history of popular culture. Again, with whatever partial merit there may be to some details here, this approach falls short of the mainstream of history as it pertains to human nature and the human relationship with its Creator.<sup>259</sup>

Similarly, ethno-history or the historical discipline that emerged from anthropology, principally concerned with the reconstruction of the histories of non-literate peoples using oral techniques has proved insufficient in analyzing the core issue that underlies the disintegration and fall of societies and civilizations. It has enjoyed some remarkable successes, in that the past of peoples formerly thought not to have a history in the conventional sense has offered insights into the history of the human race as a whole. The term is now unfashionable in academia, implying a distinction no longer accepted by many historians.



And finally social history, void of scriptural reliability, falls short of the mark. This type of history concentrates upon the interaction of groups and upon the nature of social structures in the past. Once undervalued, both as a descriptive subject concerned with unearthing the minutiae of everyday life and as a less analytical appendage to economic history, social history has developed rapidly since the 1960s. It has incorporated social science methods, particularly in analyzing the importance of class and status in understanding the process of social change. While much social history has concentrated upon the history of the lower orders, usually neglected in political history, increasing attention has been paid since the early-1980s to the analysis of the middle classes and the aristocracy as social groups. The insights of social history have also begun to broaden the scope of political history, such that the distinction between the two disciplines has become blurred.<sup>260</sup>

All these approaches to history have one thing in common: they all leave out the central explanation to human social demise as the incremental departure from Allah's authority. These splintered analyses take a partial look at an integrated human nature and a potentially consolidated human ambition. It is only the Islamic perspective on time, place, and the "unknown" that will piece together in a rationally satisfying way the explanation for the corruption, decline, and then devastation of civilizations. All human history can be placed within this Islamic-Qur'anic perspective.

Here, the reader is acquainted with the true components of this historical ebb and flow. A few lessons ago, the genesis of mankind was covered, along with the domain and dimensions of the heavenly realm: Allah (ﷻ), the angels, Iblīs, and Adam and Eve (ﷺ). Intertwined with this exposition was the depth of expression from Iblīs, the depth of vulnerability portrayed by Adam and Eve, the depth of skepticism as stated by the angels, and the truth and timeless expression of the facts as stated by Allah. In this setting, man was honored by Allah, as the angels paid respect to this error-prone human. When the dynamics between man and his surroundings began to take shape, both visible and invisible, the weakness in human nature was exposed at a very early moment in

the overall life of man, hence his departure from heaven to earth. And now, the *āyāt* follow up with the involvements, engagements, and interactions of humanity and its expanded social self.

After he committed his first sin, man descended from heaven to earth in a state of acknowledging Allah (ﷻ). Man came to this world asking Allah for forgiveness. He also came here bearing the responsibility of *khilāfah* — to carry out and carry on with Allah's commands in disregard, this time, to anything Satan had to say. Man, for the first time now, was called to manage his affair on earth cognizant of the resentfulness and jealousy of Satan.

As time moved on, the world turned out to be an affliction and examination on one level, and a call-to-duty and challenge on another level. All the elements of nature and nurture would present themselves in real life, in the mind and soul. For all human generations to come until the end of time, this lesson forecasts, through hindsight, what may be called the end-result of all these internal and external factors upon a human nature that either yearns for its Creator or denies Him.

Man, by nature, is forgetful, inattentive, and oblivious — and history can speak to this fact. Man is weak, vulnerable, and imperfect — and history can attest to this reality. Man is a target for Satan who has shown his influence upon human nature — and history can bear out this truth. These are the themes of scriptural history, not the shallow and contrived histories of non-scriptural historiographers. With all these proven attributes and potential defects of human nature, it is obvious that man needs help; and this is exactly what Allah (ﷻ) gives him.

Man came into this world with a sense of direction, a conscience of God-awareness, and an affirmation of Allah's dominance and superiority. Mankind, in the beginning — and at all new beginnings — is in congruence with Allah (ﷻ), there being nothing systematic in his potential opposition to the authority and supremacy of Allah. Over the course of time, however, human societies, due to the aforementioned frailties of human nature, drifted off-course, became aggressive, and in denial of Allah's authority. In man's creeping deviation away from God, he exposed himself to the

material and selfish currents within, which allowed him to be susceptible to their external analogs. This may be due to all the perplexed and tangled elements that rest inside the psyche of man and within his social matrix. Adrift and nearing the point of no return, he received a “wake-up call” from the Almighty. When this deviation reaches an apparent critical point, Allah, as an expression of His love and mercy, sends these people a messenger who tries to put society “back on track” — that is, where it was before its departure from Allah with notions of multiple authorities or the denial of Allah as the sole authority. Some people respond to this God-given message, see the light, and thereby place themselves in a comfortable position with Allah even though they may be in a very uncomfortable position with the power centers in their own societies. These are the people who responded to the prophets when they said, **“O my people! Conform to Allah, for you have no deity/authority besides Him.”** It is this persistent grace that always brings man back to where he should be, and away from the frailties of self and the attractive facilities or overpowering forces of a wayward society.

These *āyāt* recount the historical harbingers of that divine grace, as it was Allah (ﷻ) who sent to societies and “modernities” such noble prophets among others as Nūḥ (Noah), Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lūṭ (Lot), Shu‘ayb, Mūsā (Moses), and finally Muhammad (ﷺ). All of the prophets and apostles, those mentioned here and those not, were of one mission and one mind: to reorient their societies away from their own self-destruction to the life that accrues from conforming and complying with Allah. This brotherhood of prophets toiled to save humanity from Satan’s all-out deception of self-pride, self-sufficiency, and willful obtuseness to the counsel of Allah. As these prophets began to duly execute their mission, the status-quo linchpins from the influential people, high-ranking figures, and outspoken decision-makers started to raise objections to these prophets and their calling. This is the incompatibility that initiates the unavoidable polarization between those on Allah’s (ﷻ) side and those on Satan’s, the enemies of the former. In the final analysis, however, those who are on Allah’s (ﷻ) side are saved and assured, while those who are with Satan are wiped out.

Before going into the details of the prophetic narratives herein, a few broad generalizations about these *āyāt* may help to anchor each narrative within the overall thematic context of the Qur'an. Firstly, the Qur'anic statement of the facts puts an end to those who say that religion underwent an evolutionary process, that is, religion evolved through the annals of human history. This claim stands in contradistinction to the frank and sharp elucidation that comes out of the outspoken words of this divine Writ. All heavenly scriptures had one core message to any and all societies along the timeline of history, **“O my people! Conform to Allah, for you have no deity/authority besides Him.”** This deity/authority is none other than *rabb al-'alamīn* — the Sustainer of all peoples and worlds. Never was there a prophet who particularized or monopolized a deity/authority for a specific tribe, nation, or race. Likewise, never was there a prophet who defined the Almighty as being two, three, or more personas. And never were there prophets who endorsed totems, stars, idols, or spirits as gods! Finally, never was their a revelation or scripture from God denying or disregarding the life of the world to come.

Those who give relative credibility to religions found here and there in the world by comparing them find no grounds for their work in light of this lesson. What they call the “objective investigation” of the religions of the world by “scientific” and “historical” methods is misleading. They say the approach is descriptive and comparative, and is not concerned with questions of the truth or falsity of the beliefs they examine. Friedrich Max Muller (1823–1917), often called “the father of comparative religion,” did much to bring a knowledge of the world's religions to the notice of the English-speaking world. The discipline has contributed greatly to Western people's knowledge of religions by identifying recurring patterns of belief and practice among religions widely separated by culture and geography, as well as by indicating what is distinctive in each religion. Suffice it to say here that the understanding of this lesson does not endorse such an effort.

The oft-emphasized theme in undiluted and unpolluted scripture is that all of Allah's Apostles and Prophets (ﷺ) presented a

message that in essence is identical: the sole authority and the singular superiority of Allah (ﷻ). He is the only Sustainer of life, existence, and being; He is the master of an approaching Day of Accountability. The deviations away from this historical fact that set in over the course of time, some of which became religions themselves, are not God-inspired, nor did the prophets communicate such deviations. Before anyone else, the Muslims ought to be aware of this fact. As for those who are not Muslims, if they are not amenable to redirection by this indisputable Qur'an, they unfortunately constrain themselves to walk the course of their perceptual deviation until the programs and policies of that secular or material way of life take them past the point of no return — as is happening in the secular West today.

Secondly, prophets were commissioned from the very people they were sent to counsel. In the history of prophethood, no “foreign” prophet has ever been tasked with the mission of *tabligh* or *da'wah*. Muslims reading the Qur'an have to understand that a prophet and a follower of a prophet are made of the same psychological and social material as their target people. This issue needs to be thought through by Islamic universities, Hawzahs, and Islamic parties, running the full gamut of the Islamic movement, as they spend valuable resources in cooking up a range of today's “dispatch a *dā'ī*” programs. Their neglect of this fact has led to “enclaves” or even “ghettoes” of Muslims that are dislocated geographically and/or socially, especially in Europe and America.

Consistent with the core theme of their mission, each one of these communicating prophets also said, **“Indeed, I am giving you good and trustworthy advice.”** The conceptual and strategic distance that separates a prophet from his people requires a strong “acquaintance background” and a “consistent familiarity” to drive the points of *tawhīd* home for the opponents as well as the adherents in such societies. Throughout all prophetic missions, the toughest opposition came from the elites who were first and foremost to express their confrontation with the truth about Allah (ﷻ), especially with regard to His power and authority. The polarization between the prophet and his elitist adversaries parts what was one society into

two confrontational camps. One owes its allegiance and faith to Allah whereas the other owes its allegiance and fealty to the power structure in vogue. What was one culture and civilization aforesaid cleaves into two “social states of mind” and two separate ideological identities, between which there can be no middle ground.

Those who are sure of Allah’s power presence in worldly issues await His final word, while those who are in denial go on thinking they are invincible, simply because God does not exist, and if He does exist, then He is in heaven somewhere “too glorious” to be concerned with the petty and insignificant affairs of man. And just as their arrogance is peaking to new heights, these God-deniers are suddenly overwhelmed with a natural disaster from which they can never recover. In the course of all this, the committed Muslims are delivered to a zone of safety and security. There is no historical evidence to substantiate the notion that a civilization can be utterly annihilated before justice-centered, committed Muslims take issue with its superstructure and socializing institutions. A consolidation of committed Muslims, however small their numbers may be, that publicly challenges through a sustained struggle the *tāghūt* and elites always precedes the impending God-willed doom upon those who deny the prophets and scriptures.

Thirdly, detail is provided about the substance of Allah’s authority and dominance. Man owes his dependency relationship to Allah (ﷻ). All other powers who become authorities have no right to intrude upon this relationship. This is the principle around which history pivots. All other arguments favoring class, gender, and race are mere offshoots of the fundamental delinquency: the exclusion of Allah from man’s perceptions and policies.

Fourthly, the narrative exposes the two inclinations in human nature: one for Allah (ﷻ) and the other against Him. These two human behaviors become entrenched in social patterns that are repetitive in the course of human history, with minor variations of details pertinent to each peculiar society or culture. But the main theme remains centered around whether people are inclined toward Allah or willed against Him. Those who followed and accepted their prophets did not suffer from any kind of superiority complex,

pompousness, or overwhelming pride. They had no difficulty with whomever Allah chose to be their prophet. On the other side, the elites and upper classes of society were “too important” to have a commoner summon them to God. They felt slighted to be told that they could no longer be the rulers and decision-makers of their own society. In real life, these are the governors, chief executives, commanders, and heads of state who think that they reached their positions in life because of their merits, hard work, and personal skills. This has always been the litmus test for such self-styled and self-professed “high class” individuals in their suits and uniforms. These elites understand very well the words, **“O my people! Conform to Allah, for you have no deity/authority besides Him... But I am a messenger from the Sustainer of the worlds.”** They understood very well that conforming to Allah meant they would have to reject their own authority, deny their own superiority, and give up their privileges. Hence, they were willing to fight tooth and nail to prevent that from happening. They would fight this type of message even if that meant bringing the whole social structure down upon themselves and their children. This explains why the valid piece of history being explained here is absent from history books and even from theology books. Presidents and kings can only be sure of themselves until the moment they are overpowered by the social law of Allah, which comes at the right time and the right place.

And finally, the governments and administrations that usurp God’s authority on earth cannot tolerate the existence of the truth in any way, shape, or form. Even if those who represent this truth wanted to seclude themselves and live away from the *ṭāghūti* powers that be, the former will never be left alone. The nature of usurpers is that their ill-gotten privileges make them so insecure that they almost have to pursue the truth and its adherents to the end of the world. This is in evidence today as the “threatened” power-grabbers declare a worldwide war against Islamic self-determination, particularly the nascent Islamic Republic of Iran. The hot pursuit of those who adhere to the truth is corroborated in the narrative of Prophet Shu‘ayb (ﷺ), who says, **“Be it that a portion of you has committed itself to the message I have been tasked with and an-**

**other portion did not commit. Be patient until Allah judges between us.”**

But the power opponents of Allah (ﷻ) did not accept this “peaceful” partition of society. They could not bear seeing a foothold for God’s people who represent truth and justice. It was unthinkable for them to even contemplate a form of autonomy for justice-based and God-oriented people from their own society,

**The elites who were loaded with condescension of his people said, “We will expel you, O Shu‘ayb, and those who are committed with you from our society — or you [have the right to] return to our ways” (7:88).**

Here Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) went public with the truth, rejecting the offer of these power-intoxicated elites,

**Said [Shu‘ayb], “Even if that were against our own will? We would be lying to Allah if we were to return to your [wayward] lifestyle after Allah has saved us from it (7:88–89).**

Therefore the confrontation with powermongers and power-centered elites is visited upon committed Muslims. There is no use in trying to avoid or circumvent this inevitability. The power elites will only stop persecuting committed Muslims when the latter relinquish their commitment and convictions, and endorse the ways of materialism and Satan. The straightforward path to Allah (ﷻ) is to endure and persevere on principle and never negotiate away the freedom of being a subject of Allah, as did Shu‘ayb (ﷺ), **“We place our trust in Allah. O our Sustainer! Cause a breakthrough between us and our people, for You are the best One to do so.”** And then Allah’s will and decree follows as it has throughout the course of history.



### Nūḥ (ﷺ) Persevered for Close to a Thousand Years

The previous *āyāt*, 7:54–58, prepared the groundwork for what ensues here. At first, man is informed that the heavens and the earth were created in six eons, that the night is in nonstop pursuit of the day, and that the Sun, the Moon, the planets, the stars, and all the galaxies are conducive to human life and livelihood. Throughout the description of this entire cosmic superstructure, man is made aware that Allah (ﷻ) is in control; that he creates and He manages, initially and ultimately. The *āyāt* then proceed to describe the natural phenomena of winds, rains, water, agriculture, and vegetation. This preparatory framework leads into the narrative of prophets who were commissioned to realign human society with the will of Allah, which encompasses the more expansive reality of human society losing its way,

Indeed, We sent forth Nūḥ to his people, and he said, “O my people! Conform to Allah: you have no deity/authority besides Him. In reality, I fear for you the torment of an awesome Day.” The elite of his people said, “But we see you are obviously lost in error!” Said [Nūḥ], “My people! I am not in error, rather I am a messenger from the Sustainer of the worlds. I communicate to you the messages of my Sustainer and I give you good advice, and I know from Allah what you do not know. Are you astonished to have a message of consciousness come to you from your Sustainer by a man belonging to you — who now is warning you so that you may have an awareness [of His power], and that you may be graced?” They then accused him of lying and We delivered him and those with him in the vessel; and we drowned those who refuted our [power] manifestations; for they were, truly, a people blind [to the facts] (7:59–64).

These five *āyāt* encapsulate the narrative of Nūḥ (ﷺ) in a comparatively abbreviated manner; other segments of this narrative else-

where in the Qur'an, such as in *Sūrah*s *Hūd* and *Nūh*, provide more detail about Nūh and his people. Whatever information given here corresponds to the subject-matter and the parameters of this lesson.

**“Indeed, We sent forth Nūh to his people.”** What needs to be understood here is that Nūh (ﷺ) was not sent to another “culture,” another society, or another people; rather he was sent to his own cultural and social people — a people with whom he shared knowledge and values. Likewise, these people were not listening to some foreigner or stranger presenting them with a new set of values and laws. Nūh was one of them; they knew him and he knew them. If the committed Muslims want to be serious about understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah as they prioritize their activities moving forward, they should realize that communicators of scripture and revelation can expect to maximize the impact upon their target audience when both share the same ethnicity, language group, race, and culture.

**“He said, ‘O my people! Conform to Allah, for you have no other deity/authority beside Him.’”** Notice that he did not say “*worship* God,” as is found in most English translations of these Qur'anic words. This is a deliberate or ignorant rendition of the word *u'budū*. The word *worship*, at least the way it is understood in common English today after the institutional separation of church and state, renders a religious performance, which would mean that Nūh (ﷺ) was telling his people to correct their form of worship pertaining to God. In fact, Nūh was asking much more than that: for them to correct their relationship with God in its totality. All the values and ideas, all the social norms and structures were going to have to be remade in accordance with the standards and principles coming from Allah (ﷻ).

In an effort to do precisely that, Nūh spoke to his society by putting this focus into his call, **“O my people! Conform to Allah, for you have no deity/authority besides Him.”** Hence, as all of Allah's authority would permeate all of man's life, this immediately entailed that human societies are not “free” to have a god of their choice or a government of their invention. Mankind has to affirm the fact that Allah is the Sustainer of existence. No other being or

thing is. Allah runs all the facets, dynamics, and functions of life. Even so, in the duality of man's human nature, that was created within the workings of His overall will, there is the tendency for man to "forgo" Allah's immediate engagement in the "organization and administration" of his social behavior and policies. It is within this small aspect of His dominion that social elites think they can pursue their interests in disregard to Allah, the Almighty, and then assume there are no consequences to their desertion and defection.

And so to save his people from the certain demise that would result from their God-denial, Nūḥ (ﷺ) expressed a truth that had been absent from the public mind for hundreds if not thousands of years. He broke the intellectual and political shackles imposed on the society by its elites. Knowing the dire consequences that are awaiting such an errant society, he gave them advice that can only come from a prophet, **"Truly, I fear lest suffering befall you on an awesome Day!"** Even at this early time in human history, a prophet from Allah was cautioning his own people about the Final Day.

For the Muslims in Arabia some 1,400 years ago, and the Muslims of today or years into the future, there is a consolation in the narrative of Nūḥ and his people: that our struggle against the forces of oppression and tyranny is not an orphan struggle. Previous societies and civilizations have endured this struggle, and through it all, the prophets and their supporters were ultimately rescued and delivered from the terrible consequences of their people's decision not to affirm the authority and power of Allah (ﷻ). Nonetheless, it is indeed reassuring to know that the committed Muslims of any age belong to the history of struggle for Allah and His prophets,

**And [remember], out of all the accounts relating to the [earlier] apostles We convey to you [only] that wherewith We [aim to] make firm your heart: for through these [accounts] comes the truth to you, as well as an admonition and a reminder to all committed Muslims (11:120).**

One way or the other the final outcome shall be innocent pride and glory for the committed Muslims and ignominy and con-

demnation for those who committed their lives in reacting against Allah (ﷻ). These are instructive lessons as well as moral lessons. People in power think, at the beginning of their clash with the committed Muslims, that time is on their side, but as the struggle proceeds along its logical course, their impression starts fading as time begins to favor Allah's subjects, **“Indeed, in their narratives there is a moral lesson for those of core thought” (12:111).**

Before getting into some detail about Nūḥ (ﷺ) from authentic Islamic sources, it would be advisable to clean up some of the Judeo-Christian inaccuracies that may exist in the reader's mind, especially as some of these may be found in mainstream “Islamic” historical accounts. In Judeo-Christian literature, Noah appears to be the one (but only marginally) that the Qur'an refers to as Nūḥ. He appears as an Old Testament patriarch, to whom is attributed the construction of the ark, in which the survivors of the primeval Flood rode to safety, as well as the origins of vine-growing. It is said in this literature that the word *Noah* means *rest*, referring to the ark he built as a place where the survivors of mankind “rested” while the world was scoured by floods and devastation.

Noah, according to the Genesis chronology, was from the tenth generation after Adam (Genesis, 5:1–32). The story of his faithfulness to the divine command to build the ark (Genesis, 6:5–9:17) seems to be set in the midst of another story about Noah as the first cultivator of the grape (Genesis, 5:29; 9:18–27), which ends with a rather disgraceful drunken bout on Noah's part.

Noah, however, is best known in Judaism and Christianity as the faithful one at the time of great wickedness that caused God to lose patience and send the Flood. God, wishing to preserve the future of humankind and the beasts, told Noah to build an ark and move his wife, his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, along with their wives, and a pair of every kind of creature, into it. This Noah did, to the great merriment of his neighbors. The rains came and all the rest of earth's inhabitants drowned. As the waters subsided, the ark grounded on top of Mt. Ararat. Noah set free a raven, which returned, and doves, some of which did not return, showing that the earth was uncovered in spots. Noah's family disembarked, set up an

altar, and offered sacrifices of thanksgiving to God. God responded with the rainbow sign, marking the covenant that promised God would never destroy the world by water again.

The story of Noah in the Book of Genesis is similar to the Babylonian flood account recorded in the Gilgamesh Epic.<sup>261</sup> The Babylonian hero is like Noah, and there are similar details about the building of the ark, the cargo, the use of birds, and the sacrifice. However, the Hebrew story is rewritten from a monotheistic viewpoint. In the Babylonian account, there are many gods; in the Hebrew, only one.

With this brief overview of the way Noah is portrayed in Judeo-Christian sources, one should be circumspect when he encounters this type of information in reviewing some of the *tafsīr* literature or Islamic history books on this topic. This writer cannot be certain about how some Muslim scholars can argue that Nūḥ is the son of Lamek, the son of Matushalakh, the son of Akhnukh, who is Idrīs, the son of Yared (Jared), the son of Mahla'il, the son of Qaynan, the son of Anoosh, the son of Sheith, the son of Adam (ﷺ).<sup>262</sup> It appears that this type of genealogy information crept into Islamic books through the agency of Jews and Christians who became Muslims or by Muslims who obtained their information from Jews and Christians.

Turning more pages of this Islamic *tafsīr* and hadith literature, one discovers comments about Nūḥ being the first to prohibit marriage to daughters, sisters, and aunts; and Allah (ﷻ) sending him as an apostle to his people when he was 50 years old and a carpenter.<sup>263</sup> Other pronouncements say that he lived for 60 years after the Flood, and that the time period between Adam and Nūḥ (ﷺ) was ten centuries or generations.<sup>264</sup> In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, it is said that Nūḥ was the first apostle sent to the *mushriks*.<sup>265</sup> Al-Tirmidhī says that all mankind can be genealogically traced back to Nūḥ.<sup>266</sup> The following information, laced with racial overtones, that also comes from Islamic references is proof of its original (non-Islamic) source. It is said that the Arabians, Persians, Byzantines, and the inhabitants of the Levant and Yemen are the descendants of Sam (Shem) the son of Nūḥ; that people in India (north and south), the Negroes, the

people of the Nile valley, Ethiopia, and Nubians, as well as all blacks are the descendants of Ham, another son of Nūḥ; and that the Turks, Berbers, Orientals, Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj, and Aryans are descendants of his son Japheth.<sup>267</sup> This writer is beside himself as to how this type of information has not been weeded out of Islamic references after all of these centuries.

Beyond this, there are also stories about how the worship of idols began. At first, there were some virtuous people who passed away. And when they were buried, their people built shrines or mausoleums over the burial sites. Then the people added images or pictures of these deceased to the burial sites as a reminder of their virtue and status, so as to buoy the spirits of the living to emulate the dead ancestors. After a lapse of generations, the images turned into carvings, then into three-dimensional sculptures, and then finally into an idol. As the centuries went by these idols became gods, wherein the latter acquired the names of the original virtuous individuals, such as Wadd, Suwā', Yaghūth, Ya'ūq, and Nasr.<sup>268</sup> When all of this reached outrageous proportions God sent Nūḥ (ﷺ) to bring the people back to the "worship" of the true and only God. And thus he proclaimed, **"O my people! Worship God, for you have no other deity beside Him."**

As partially true as this may be, it reduces the nature of man's relationship with God to a ritual or "religious" one. But it is much more than being just ritualistic or the like. Man's relationship with Allah (ﷻ) is holistic and all-inclusive, permeating all his feelings, actions, statements, and labor. This fact is buried underneath the partial presentation of the issue above. It is not too hard to see that the vast majority of people who "worship" the One God simultaneously conform and comply with other authorities or superiors in their daily lives, in their social programs, in their economic structures, and in their relationships with other races and peoples.

Nūḥ (ﷺ) is mentioned 43 times throughout this rigorous Revelation. His narrative has been detailed in *Sūrah's al-A'raf*, *Hūd*, *al-Mu'minūn*, *al-Shu'arā'*, *al-Qamar*, and *Nūḥ*. Threading together all of these accounts is the fact that Nūḥ summoned his people to act in accordance with Allah (ﷻ) — and no other higher-ups or

masters. In the process, they would have had to abandon their former religion, which gave legitimacy to their unreliable status quo. But Nūḥ's people, stubborn and vicious in their rejection of the prophet as well as his message, continued to follow their hierarchy and their power structure. Accordingly, these people in Nūḥ's society insisted on the religious structure around Wadd, Suwā', Yaghūth, Ya'ūq, and Nasr. In their foolish and "high-cultured" way, they intimated to Nūḥ that even though he had already "argued them to death," they would still not abandon their ways; and that, therefore, he should present them with the punishment and suffering he had promised. In response, Nūḥ told them that the unfolding of their destruction was timed by Allah, not him.

When Nūḥ (ﷺ) finally despaired for his people after a time period of almost 1,000 years of calling them to the truth, Allah (ﷻ) ordered him to build the ark of salvation. In the course of building this vessel Nūḥ was subjected to ridicule and derision from his people. When he finished building the ark he took along with him his family (except for his wife and a son) and the handful of committed Muslims around him.<sup>269</sup> He also placed in this ark pairs of animals, or what may have been the genetic origins of the animal kingdom today.

Then the deluge began with water gushing out of the earth and then falling from the sky. The water levels began to rise until all living matter on earth was inundated. Humans who were not in this navigational vessel died, even Nūḥ's son who had refused to ride with his father,

**He [the son] said, "I will seek refuge on a mountaintop that will shield me from [the danger and destruction of] water." Said [Nūḥ], "Today there is no protection [for anyone] from Allah's judgement, save [for] those who have earned [His] mercy!" And a wave rose up between them, and [the son] was among those who were drowned (11:43).**

Eventually, the vessel came to rest upon Jabal al-Jūdīy,

**And the word was spoken, “O earth, swallow up your waters! And, O sky, cease [your rain]!” And the waters sank into the earth, and the will [of Allah] was done, and the ark came to rest on Mt. Jūdīy (11:44).**

There are two opinions concerning the geography of the Flood: one says that it engulfed the whole world, while the other says that it was limited to the geography of Nūḥ’s society.<sup>270</sup> The Qur’an does not provide extensive details about the volume or bulk of Nūḥ’s vessel. It only notes the following

**...in laden ship(s) (36:41);**

**...but him We bore on that [vessel] made of [mere] planks and nails (54:13).**

The Qur’an also says that the ship/vessel was built with inspiration and instructions from Allah (ﷻ), **“But build, under Our eyes and according to Our inspiration, the ark [that shall save you and those who follow you]” (11:37).**

One aspect of scriptural history and the dynamics of civilizations is that tribulations generally “overflow” or encompass quite a bit more than just the center of deviation. This means it is possible for that Flood to have spread well beyond the peculiar society of Nūḥ (ﷺ). In today’s world, such an occurrence would be equivalent to saying that because of the deviation and opposition of the government and elites of the United States, the destruction of the United States via a natural catastrophe will overflow its immediate geography to include other lands — all the more so if these other societies are not in line with God and are envious to become copies of the targeted society. When obstruction to divine justice and confrontation with the divine will reach the point of no return, such a society brings upon itself the social law of eternity as it is destroyed by natural upheavals. This applies even to those who opposed the overall destructive direction their society was on, and took a public stand against it. In the life to come they will be in good standing,



but because of the preponderance of iniquity and immorality they “go under” with the society they are located in, **“And guard against a *fitnaḥ* that will not inflict only the aggressors among you in particular” (8:25)**. However, in other instances, as is the case here, Allah (ﷻ) rescues those who are committed to Him.

In the back-and-forth between Nūḥ (ﷺ) and his people, the former pronounced two statements. In the first, directed to the committed Muslims, he said,

**My Sustainer! Forgive me and my parents our sins, and [forgive] whoever enters my house as a committed Muslim, and [forgive all] committed Muslims — men and women... (71:28).**

In the second of his pronounced invocations, directed against the deniers of Allah (ﷻ),

**And Nūḥ said, “O my Sustainer! Leave not on earth any dwelling denier [of Your power and authority]. For if You leave them [on earth] they will mislead Your subjects and will only reproduce outright and categorical deniers [of Your power and authority]” (71:26–27).**

As mentioned above, Nūḥ’s own son was one of those who perished in the ominous Flood, as he did injustice to himself by denying Allah’s authority and power. Moreover, Nūḥ’s wife broke faith with her own husband, a prophet of God. She was similar in character to Prophet Lūṭ’s wife, who would act as a conduit for homosexuals casting their perverted gazes at the houseguests of her husband. The final words of truth about these two women have been recorded for all posterity,

**For those who are bent on denying the truth, Allah has propounded a parable in [the stories of] Nūḥ’s wife and Lūṭ’s wife: they were wedded to two of Our righteous servants, and each one betrayed her husband; and**

neither of the two [husbands] will be of any avail to these two women when they are told [on Judgement Day], “Enter the Fire with all those [other sinners] who enter it!” (66:10).

A subtle but important issue that has to be highlighted here is that the feelings of Nūḥ (ﷺ) were on par with his knowledge. It is one thing to know of pending catastrophes and not feel the magnitude of the misery they cause; but it is another thing to know about such forecasted events and then feel the fear of what is going to happen in the form of calamities and torment.

Nūḥ (ﷺ) was basically calling on his people to renounce the “system” that was enslaving them. But the elites in his society would have none of it, **“Really, we see that you are obviously in manifest erroneous belief!”** This is parallel to what the Arabian *mushriks* said to Muhammad (ﷺ), “He defected; he is a renegade!” Erroneous belief can reach a point that when the right man comes along with the right words to express the truth, even he can be branded as erroneous and false — a renegade. Human nature can evidently express its objection to Allah (ﷻ) and His apostles with words of contempt and scorn.

In the realm of human nature nothing much has changed. Despite all the technological gadgets, scientific tools, and media channels available to the elitists of the day, their attitude and behavior toward the conveyors of Allah’s message has not changed much from that of thousands of years ago. They say that committed Muslims are misguided, illogical, and terroristic. The scrambling *jāhiliyah* today is forging its vocabulary to define extremist Muslims as the ones who are opting out of their system of abuse and exploitation, and moderate Muslims as the ones who give protection and legitimacy to their empire of imperialism. It is devising its own programs to rehabilitate and re-educate these extremists and lawbreakers through rewards, bonuses, incentives, and wages. In today’s world, were Nūḥ (ﷺ) here to speak out on the issues, the same voices would be saying that the true heralds of scripture are making a terrible mistake by opting out of imperialist and Zionist societies.

When Muslims struggle for justice, these elitist sociopaths say that Islam is a religion of war and bloodshed. When Muslims want to drain the cesspool of immorality and vice, from drugs to prostitution, they say Islam is austere, puritanical, and impractical. When Muslims want to enjoy the rights other people have and live a life of equality, they say that Muslims do not respect human rights. When Muslims do not want their women-folk — sisters, daughters, mothers, and aunts — to be sex-objects at the whims of men, they say Muslims do not respect women. When committed Muslims explain that Islam is independent, has a God-given program, and is not disposed to imperialists and Zionists, they say that Islam is not compatible with liberal democracy. When committed Muslims explain that Islam is God-defined, scriptural at its source, and modeled by Allah's Prophets (ﷺ), they say that Islam cannot be secularized and made to fit within the Western pluralistic framework. When committed Muslims try to revitalize their ideology by making up for centuries of rational lapse and academic withdrawal, they say that science cannot flourish under Islam. When committed Muslims are frank enough to say that non-Muslims cannot climb the civil ladder as high as committed Muslims can — thereby becoming the ranking officers or personnel in the Islamic judiciary, executive, and legislative departments of an Islamic government — they say that Islam is not tolerant of non-Muslims, while they have no Muslims who occupy positions on the highest levels of their judiciary, executive, or legislative branches of government. A system opposed to God thousands of years ago is no different than a system opposed to God today. *Kufr* has always been, and will always be *kufr*. The only thing that changes are some configurations, circumstances, and choices of words.

Nūḥ (ﷺ) rejected their assertion that he was making a serious mistake. He informed them that he did not invent this call, that it came directly from God, the Almighty, and that he is only a messenger from the Sustainer of the worlds,

Said [Nūḥ], “O my people! There is no deep error in me, but I am an apostle from the Sustainer of the

**worlds. I am communicating to you my Sustainer's messages and giving you good advice: for I know [through revelation] from Allah what you do not know (7:61–62).**

As is the case with elites, they were surprised that God would choose someone as mundane or as unremarkable as Nūḥ to be an apostle from a society that has a pool of talented people who qualify — in their eyes — for this assignment much more than its bearer. In a sense, they were asking themselves how Nūḥ could know something from God that they did not know. To address their psychologically imbalanced mentality, Allah (ﷻ) says,

**Why, do you deem it strange that a tidings from your Sustainer should have come to you through a man from among yourselves, so that he might warn you, and that you might become guardedly conscious [of Allah], and that you might be graced by His mercy? (7:63).**

These elites may have their own experiences and standards in evaluating human beings; this is well-known from the elites of our time and generation. However, the dimension of man's affinity and rapport with Allah is something only He Himself can evaluate. The elites, whose arrogance is boundless, want to intrude in this area as well, and hence will in no manner of fairness give God His due.

Nūḥ (ﷺ) had nothing to gain from his God-defined task in material terms. He was not expecting his truthful ideological position to deliver him huge profits and stature in this lifetime. He was sincerely concerned about the future of his people, and so he spent a thousand years trying to convince them. But once human nature has gone off course there is not much that can be done about it, even by the exceptional determination of prophets. Sometimes it seems like human beings have just become too consumed by their luxuries, passions, and privileges to think, reconsider, or change their minds. And so it was with Nūḥ's people. They could not see how profound their mistake was in abandoning Allah (ﷻ) and they could not see the terrible end that would ultimately engulf and drown them,

And yet they gave him the lie! And so We saved him and those who stood by him, in the ark, the while We caused those who had given the lie to Our messages to drown: verily, they were blind folk! (7:64).

### Hūd's (ﷺ) Warnings to 'Ād Go Unheeded

After Nūḥ, the passage of generations and centuries finally reached the people of 'Ād, to whom Prophet Hūd (ﷺ) was sent,

And to [the dynasty of] 'Ād [We sent] their brother Hūd. He said, "O my people! Conform to Allah alone: you have no deity/authority other than Him. Will you not, then, be on guard [concerning His power in this world]?" Said the elites among his people, who refused to acknowledge the truth, "Verily, we see that you are weak-minded; and, verily, we think that you are a liar!"

Said [Hūd], "O my people! There is no weak-mindedness in me, but I am an apostle from the Sustainer of all the worlds. I am delivering to you my Sustainer's messages and advising you truly and well. Why, do you deem it strange that a tidings from your Sustainer should have come to you through a man from among yourselves, so that he might warn you? Do but remember how He made you heirs to Nūḥ's people, and endowed you abundantly with power: remember, then, Allah's blessings, so that you might be productive!"

They answered, "Have you come to us [with the demand] that we conform to Allah alone, and give up all that our forefathers were wont to worship? Bring about, then, that [punishment] with which you have threatened us, if you are a man of truth!" Said [Hūd], "You are already beset by loathsome evil and by your Sustainer's condemnation! Do you argue with me about the [empty] names you have invented — you and your forefathers — for which Allah has bestowed no

warrant from on high? Wait, then, [for what will happen]: indeed, I shall wait with you!” And so, by Our grace, We saved him and those who stood with him, the while We wiped out the last remnant of those who gave the lie to Our messages and would not commit themselves [to Us] (7:65–72).

Note that relative to the story of Nūḥ (ﷺ), this is the same message, accompanied by the same dialogue, and finally ends up with the same outcome. Other than the individual actors endemic to the time and place, everything is the same — because the same social law is at work. What has taken shape may be called the “social nature.” And it applies across the board.

The social order of ‘Ād, characterized by some of the most profound practices, is one of the oldest in the world. It appears that they predated Ibrāhīm, but came after Nūḥ (ﷺ). The probability that ‘Ād knew of the Flood and the destruction of Nūḥ’s people cannot be discounted. The Flood was a demonstration of Allah’s power, which in human affairs is the issue that is always disputed when it comes to winning over people to Allah (ﷻ). And in this manner, Hūd (ﷺ) queried his people, **“Will you not guard [against Allah’s power presence]?”**

*Tafsīr* literature indicates that ‘Ād was a powerful stock of people who inhabited southern Arabia, from Yemen to Ḥaḍramawt. Inasmuch as they deified idols, their religious beliefs were similar to the people of Nūḥ. They were known for their subjugation of other peoples and societies. Furthermore, it appears that pre-Qur’anic scriptures do not make any reference to them.<sup>271</sup> Though this may be hard to verify, it is said that Hūd (ﷺ) was the first to speak Arabic.<sup>272</sup> Apparently from an unremarkable family line, Hūd was chosen by Allah (ﷻ) to beseech his people to conform to Him in all walks of life, and to desist from offending and abusing other people. However, they rejected that and said, **“Who has more power than us?” (41:15).**<sup>273</sup>

The world had been purged of foul societies in the bygone generation of Nūḥ (ﷺ). But corruption set in, and after an

extended period of time, Satan caused this society to abandon Allah (ﷻ) as authority and power. In yet another expression of His mercy, Allah dispatched a prophet to guide this egregious society back to its correct relationship with Him,

**And to [the clan of] 'Ād [We sent] their brother Hūd. He said, "O my people! Conform to Allah alone: you have no deity/authority other than Him. Will you not, then, be on guard [concerning Allah's power in this world]?" (7:65).**

Like their counterparts in all other times and places, the power elite look down on a commoner who claims to be a prophet and tells them to take note of Allah's power and then behave accordingly. These elites have nothing but ridicule and scorn for a character they consider lowly,

**The elites of his people, who are in God-denial, said, "In fact, we see you to be devoid of good sense and judgement; and we, certainly reckon that you are a liar" (7:66).**

What else would these elites be expected to say? Having all sorts of power — military, financial, social, religious, etc. — the elites would be dumbfounded to see a "nobody" coming to speak to them about Allah's power and authority. They would consider such a person to be out of his mind,

**Said [Hūd], "O my people! I am not irrational [or unbalanced]; rather I am a messenger from the Sustainer of the worlds. I pass on to you the messages of my Sustainer, and I give you good advice and am trustworthy (7:67-68).**

Hūd (ﷻ) refuted their accusation, saying that he is neither mad, nor crazy. He also made it clear that he knows what he is talking

about. Like Nūḥ before him, Hūd transparently and sincerely explained to his people that the source of his pronouncements and the objective of his words is Allah (ﷻ), the Lord of the worlds. Hūd was not intimidated, and thus he did not equivocate; on the contrary, he expressed himself with confidence and purpose.

To reiterate the fact that all prophets came to execute the same mission, notice that Hūd repeats almost word for word what Nūḥ (ﷺ) before him said, as if they were one person speaking, **“Are you surprised that a reminder comes to you from your Sustainer, delivered as a warning through a man from among yourselves?”** Then the truth comes into greater focus when Hūd reminds them of who they are in the context of their time: that they inherited a dominant power position in worldly affairs after Nūḥ’s people; that they are rugged, tough, and well-set because of their geographical location and mountain rearing; and that they are now a dominant force on earth, **“Do but remember how He made you heirs to Nūḥ’s people, and endowed you abundantly with power: remember, then, Allah’s blessings, so that you might be generative.”**

Attaining a position of power, and expanding this power in all directions should have brought with it a spirit of appreciation and an air of gratitude. But, as the maxim goes, power corrupts, and the obsession with power hastens that corruption. Thus, ‘Ād became subject to Allah’s unfailing social law (*sunnah*). Had they recognized that power belongs to Allah (ﷻ) initially and ultimately they would not have found themselves in the predicament they were in. Rather, they would have, in attributing power to Allah, been eminent and thriving. Not to overstate the point, when human nature is poisoned it cannot think properly, it cannot act with prudence, and it cannot recall past human experience. The elites, as to be expected, proved they were so intoxicated with power that even insulting God’s authority and power was not out of the realm of possibility for them. And so they demanded Hūd to serve up the God-promised punishment,

**They said, “Did you come to us to have us conform to Allah alone? And to part with the established ways of**



**our forefathers? Bring about, then, that [punishment] with which you have threatened us, if you are a man of truth!” (7:70).**

In listening to them, one would think that Hūd (ﷺ) was telling them to do something terrible and awful, **“Did you come to us to have us conform to Allah alone and to have us part with the accomplished ways of our ancestors?”** In saying this, they proved they are not free to choose Allah (ﷻ) as authority and power. They showed themselves to be trapped by their traditions and self-centered history. Besides, in such social orders, mature programs and strategies, none of which consider Allah to be authority or power, are always in motion. The residual of history and the propulsion of their national interests made it impossible for them to turn their backs on “who they are” and re-identify themselves as subjects of Allah. Instead of listening to and prioritizing truth and justice, they decided they would rather face the consequences of their combined national interest — almost as if elites in power are incapable of correcting the direction of their econo-social locomotive as it speeds toward the precipice **“Bring us the punishment that you promise us, if you are true to your word.”**

In response, therefore,

**Said [Hūd], “You are already plagued by social toxicity and by your Sustainer’s condemnation! Do you argue with me about the [empty] names you have invented — you and your forefathers — for which Allah has bestowed no warrant from on high? Wait, then, [for what will happen]: verily, I shall wait with you!” (7:71).**

Hūd (ﷺ) informed them of the impending consequences due to their clash with Allah (ﷻ). With the inevitability of the forthcoming suffering, they were challenged to make up their minds. This motion of civilizational termination by Allah cannot be reversed once it is set into motion. Hūd’s final words expose the ridiculous religiosity that champions their injustice and oppression, **“Do you**

argue with me about the [empty] names you have invented — you and your predecessors — for which Allah has bestowed no warrant from on high?” This means that whatever religious symbols or idols they had concocted would not have been able to save them from the imminent disaster that was about to unfold. The insignificant and hollow names of idols have no validity from heaven and no credibility with Allah. The false religions that serve as a vehicle for the interests of ruling elites and counterfeit powers have carried these empty names and designations since time immemorial. The bottom line is that when there is no scriptural root to such designations, then they mean nothing.

With a confident heart and a resolute mind Hūd (ﷺ) spoke to these “spent elites,” **“So anticipate [the doom]; I am also in anticipation [with you].”** This “divine” confidence and resolve marks the pivot between pretentious power and real power. Hūd stood up to the establishment’s elites and spoke the truth. He spoke truth to power and did not waver. This is the character and personality that brings civilizations crashing down. When the committed are with Allah (ﷻ), as Hūd was, all this other fleeting show of power is a short time away from failure and disintegration. He stood on the side of Allah; and then he let their society crumble as Allah willed it,

**And so, by Our grace, We saved him and those who stood by him, the while We wiped out the last remnant of those who gave the lie to Our messages and would not commit themselves [to Us] (7:72).**

The form of destruction that brought down the social order of ‘Ād — violent winds and turbulent storms — is explained in other *āyāt* of the Qur’an,

**And [you have the same message] in [what happened to the dynasty of] ‘Ād, when We let loose against them that life-destroying wind, which spared nothing of what it came upon, but caused [all of] it to become like bones dead and decayed (51:41–42);**

And as for 'Ād — they were destroyed by a storm-wind furiously raging, which He willed against them for seven nights and eight days without cease, so that in the end you could see those people laid low [in death], as though they were so many [uprooted] trunks of hollow palm trees: and do you now see any remnant of them? (69:6–8).

This is what happens to governments and establishments that are puffed up with vainglory and power. 'Ād was decimated by the equivalent of what is known today as a typhoon or cyclone; meteorological observations describe what these can potentially do to a society, **“Bound to destroy everything at its Sustainer’s behest! And then they were so utterly wiped out that nothing could be seen save their [empty] dwellings...”** (46:25).

Their consuming injustice and their unmitigated oppression of others, not to mention their “national” power psychosis, coalesced into the fatal civilizational mistake that destroyed them. **“Now as for [the race of] 'Ād, they walked arrogantly on earth, [offending] against all right, and saying, ‘Who could be a power greater than ours?’”** (41:15). This civilization prided itself on the huge buildings, towering edifices, and reinforced superstructures it had built. In dressing down these people intoxicated with their own power, Hūd (ﷺ) said,

**Will you, in your wanton folly, build altars on every height, and make for yourselves mighty castles, [hoping] that you might become immortal? And will you [always], whenever you lay hand [on others], lay hand [on them] crushingly, without restraint? Be, then, conscious of Allah [His power presence] and pay heed to me (26:128–131).**

But 'Ād’s conscience was not about to recover from its self-delusion and narcissism,

Said they, “O Hūd! You have brought us no clear evidence [that you are a prophet]: and we are not going to forsake our gods on your mere word, the more so as we do not believe you. We can say no more than that one of our gods may have smitten you with something evil!” (11:53–54).

As the “superpower” of its time, ‘Ād was destroyed by a gargantuan storm, an intense meteorological disturbance. Man lives under a canopy of a dense and turbulent sea of gases. This mix of nitrogen, oxygen, argon, and carbon dioxide, which collectively make up the composition of air, is perhaps 10 miles deep, and is in perpetual motion, with tremendous eddies and currents swirling and flowing at different speeds, pressures, and temperatures. Frequently, when volatile air masses collide or otherwise interact, storms sweep across the earth’s surface; each day thousands of tempests of one sort or another vent their fury around the globe.<sup>274</sup>

A single thunderstorm can release some 125 million gallons of water and discharge enough heat to supply the entire United States with electrical power for 20 minutes. A full-blown hurricane will multiply these values an astronomical 12,000 times. In their terrible power, storms have built frightful records of death and destruction. In Bangladesh in 1970, a tropical cyclone with flooding rain and 120-mph winds claimed 300,000 lives. Yet storms are vital cogs in the earth’s great engine. They are the planet’s air conditioners, continually exchanging warm air from the tropics for cool air from polar regions. Storm winds cleanse noxious pollutants from the air, and rain clouds transport life-sustaining water to parched regions.<sup>275</sup>

Though mankind has forever suffered and profited from storms, only recently have scientists begun to understand their workings. The first clues followed the invention of the thermometer and barometer in the 17th century CE. Today, aircraft and satellites track storms in the farthest reaches of the planet, and high-speed computers process enormous banks of data to assist in forecasting. The more meteorologists learn about storms, the more they appreciate their phenomenal complexity. A typhoon sweeping across the

Pacific Ocean may affect a million cubic miles of atmosphere in so many different ways that even the most sophisticated computer is at a loss to sort everything out.<sup>276</sup>

The hurricane or cyclone that destroyed 'Ād was calculated to do just that. This intense, often devastating, tropical storm which occurs as a vortex spiraling around a low pressure system is not unrelated to its target area. One can get absorbed by the physical characteristics of a hurricane such as its high wind speeds, above 75 mph, or the calm in the eye of the storm; or by the fact that they originate over tropical oceans, usually between July and October, and move in a west or northwest direction (southwest in the southern hemisphere), losing energy as they reach land; or by the way they are named in alphabetical sequence as they occur.<sup>277</sup>

Regrettably, what does not seem to absorb observers is how and when these hurricanes, typhoons, or cyclones become a threat to civilization. The mystery that has yet to be explained in "scientific" terms is the relationship between the massive social turbulence resulting from societies running against Allah's social laws (*sunan*) and the astronomical natural upheavals that correspond to them. Understanding history through scripture, it is this chronological succession of social turbulence to natural upheaval that brings down a particular errant civilization, as was the case with 'Ād and other such societies and "superpowers."

### Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ), the She-Camel, and Thamūd

At the beginning of this *sūrah*, the momentous discourse on Adam (ﷺ) established the power, leverage, mightiness, and singularity of Allah (ﷻ); as well as resurrection after death. The middle *āyāt* of the *sūrah* recount the lives of certain God-oriented prophets as they engaged their God-denying societies. After the narratives of Nūḥ and then Hūd comes that of Prophet Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) and his people of Thamūd, the “superpower” heir to ‘Ād. Ṣāliḥ’s name is mentioned in the Qur’an nine times in *āyāt* 7:73, 75, 77; 11:61–62, 66, 89; and 26:142.

And to [the dynasty of] Thamūd [We sent] their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said, “O my people! Conform to Allah alone: you have no deity/authority other than Him. Clear evidence of the truth has now come to you from your Sustainer. This she-camel belonging to Allah shall be a token for you: so leave her alone to pasture on Allah’s earth, and do her no harm, lest grievous chastisement befall you. And remember how He made you heirs to [the dynasty of] ‘Ād and settled you firmly on earth, so that you [are able to] build for yourselves castles on its plains and hew out mountains [to serve you] as dwellings: remember, then, Allah’s blessings, and do not act wickedly on earth by spreading corruption.”

The elites among his people, who gloried in their arrogance toward all who were deemed weak, said to the committed [faithful] among them, “Do you [really] know that Ṣāliḥ has been sent by his Sustainer?” They answered, “Verily, we believe in and commit ourselves to the message he bears.” [But] the arrogant ones said, “Behold, what you have come to believe in we refuse to regard as true!”

And then they cruelly slaughtered the she-camel, and turned with disdain from their Sustainer’s commandment, and said, “O Ṣāliḥ! Bring about that [pun-

ishment] with which you have threatened us, if you are truly one of Allah's message-bearers!" Thereupon an earthquake overtook them: and then they lay lifeless, in their very homes, on the ground. And [Ṣāliḥ] turned away from them, and said, "O my people! Indeed, I delivered to you my Sustainer's message and gave you good advice, but you did not love those who gave [you] good advice" (7:73–79).

It appears that Thamūd was an Arabian power center that thrived in the interval between Ibrāhīm and Hūd (ﷺ).<sup>278</sup> In the social climate of the Arabian Peninsula, Thamūd was heir to 'Ād, and its seat of power was in al-Ḥijr somewhere between al-Ḥijāz and al-Shām. It is said that the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) passed through their area and dwellings on his way to Tabūk during the 9th *hijrī* year.

**"And to [the dynasty of] Thamūd [We sent] their brother Ṣāliḥ."** The word *brother* here does not mean their *blood brother*, because it is impossible for one person to be a brother to a dynasty of thousands of people. What is meant here is that Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) was a person very close to these people, involved in their daily lives, and very much within the scope of their attention.

Thamūd, just like 'Ād and Nūḥ's people aforetime, used its ungodly religion to justify its superpower status and preemptory status quo. With this came an abundance of prosperity and leisure. It was at this 11th hour in Thamūd's economic state of growth and rising profits that Allah sent Ṣāliḥ to his people. This prophet came from the very fabric of Thamūd. In this "flourishing of civilization" Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) reminded them to be conscious of the real power in their lives, and to comply with a higher authority, a consummate deity. In so many words, he advised them to cease mindlessly pursuing worldly gains and hegemony without reference to Allah (ﷻ),

**And indeed, within every society have We raised up an apostle [entrusted with this message], "Conform unto Allah, and shun excessive and concentrated powers [of evil] (16:36);**

**And before your time [O Muhammad] We never sent any apostle without having revealed to him that there is no deity/authority save Me, [and that], therefore, you shall conform to Me [alone]! (21:25).**

As to be expected, only the lower classes in his society responded positively, committing themselves to the sole authority and power of Allah (ﷻ), and acknowledging Him as both deity and authority both. The elites — a combination of officials, tribal chiefs, and civic leaders — responded in the same way their counterparts had done in bygone (destroyed) social orders: they took issue with Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) and his message, denying altogether that he was a prophet while holding on to their pro-status-quo religion and all the interests and benefits that attend a superpower position. Affirming the behavior of all preceding superpower nations, they boasted and bragged about their own perceived self-worth, **“Why — on him alone from among all of us should a [divine] reminder have been bestowed? No, but he [Ṣāliḥ] is an overproud liar!” (54:25).**

Characteristic of the aristocracies of all ages is their taking pride in shaping the way that others in their societies think and behave. Hence, when someone(s) confidently professes he can think for himself, the elites immediately take offense as they rev up their media engines to condemn such a one or question his sanity. It is in this vein that Thamūd’s elites challenged the underclass in society,

**The elites among his people, who gloried in their arrogance toward all who were deemed weak, said to the committed [faithful] among them, “Are you sure that Ṣāliḥ has been sent by his Sustainer?” They replied, “Indeed, we are committed to what he has been sent with.” [And then] the arrogant ones responded, “Indeed, we reject that to which you are committed (7:75–76).**

As mentioned in previous volumes of this *tafsīr*, an important, and telling, characteristic of the ruling classes is the way they poke fun at Allah’s messengers by demanding from them superhuman



feats such as showing angels, bringing the dead back to life, or some other such miraculous occurrence. In their own adolescent way of looking at things, they think that such supernormal phenomena “prove” prophethood. In any case, Allah (ﷻ) is the one who decides when or where not to display a miracle. Moreover, it is a token of Allah’s mercy that He does not give them what they so importunately demand, for were He to do so and they still reject Him, then their destruction is certain. This latter aspect is exactly what happened in the matter of Thamūd and the she-camel,

**Replied he [Ṣāliḥ], “This she-camel shall have a share of water, and you shall have a share of water, on the days appointed [therefor] (26:155);**

**Behold, [O Ṣāliḥ], “We are letting loose this she-camel as a test for them; and you but watch them, and contain yourself in patience. And let them know that the water [of their wells] is to be divided between them, with each share of water equitably apportioned” (54:27–28).**

This she-camel would drink from the well or river one day and they would draw their water the other day. With this arrangement they could have milked the camel indefinitely — and that was the miracle they had asked for. In a more detailed outline of this miracle it is said that Thamūd asked Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) to exhibit this miracle at a place of their choosing — a rock in the area of al-Ḥijr (this place name roughly means *rocky tract*). Ṣāliḥ insisted that should a miracle materialize, they would all immediately yield to Allah (ﷻ) — and they agreed. So when Ṣāliḥ prayed to Allah, that rock began to move, and then cleaved to expose a pregnant she-camel, with its fetus moving in its abdomen. Seeing this, some people of Thamūd acknowledged Allah and committed themselves to Him; but others refused to go along. The she-camel gave birth and continued to dwell there, having one day of its own to access the water, whereas the people would draw water on another day. On its watering day they would milk the she-camel and consume its milk.<sup>279</sup> ‘Abdullāh

ibn ‘Abbās said that with this arrangement Thamūd would have water on one day and the she-camel’s milk on the other day.<sup>280</sup> Those who try to understand this event in terms of a particular set of human experiences — for instance, how an entire tribe could partake of the milk of one camel — should realize that what took place was a miracle; and miracles, in general, transcend the collective and cumulative reasoning capacity of man. Hence, insofar as the guidance man needs to manage his affair on earth, “how it happened” has never been as important as “why it happened.”

Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) cautioned them not to harm this camel, and to let it graze wherever it wanted to in Allah’s open land — no one should impede or annoy it. He warned them that if they did, they would be setting themselves up for the “final solution.” When Ṣāliḥ said, **“This she-camel belonging to Allah shall be an *āyah* for you...”** he was avowing and substantiating the fact that he is a prophet, and as they wanted “proof,” they saw how miraculously this she-camel was created from within a rock — and pregnant to boot.

Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) tried his best, on the one hand, to urge his people to attribute their status and affluence to the bounties and blessings of Allah, while on the other hand, to admonish them from spreading corruption on earth. He reminded them that they had become the heirs of ‘Ād, their predecessor hyper-power. He tried to inspire them to appreciate Allah’s munificence and benevolence that enabled them to acquire high skills and what may be called in today’s language “technological superiority.” Their agricultural, industrial, and technological progress was no freak development; rather it was a calculated preparation from Allah (ﷻ). Even their unprecedented homes carved out of mountains should have been cause for thanking Allah. This may have contributed to their false sense of security, as they ultimately refused to be thankful and grateful.

As a testimony to their pompousness and contempt, these elites and upper classes of society considered themselves “too important” to listen to a meddling Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) and a bothersome “theoretical” and “unknown” God. So they made fun of him, objected to his public statements, and went their God-opposing way to finally killing the she-camel,

**And then they brutally butchered the she-camel, and turned with disdain from their Sustainer's commandment, and said, "O Ṣāliḥ! Bring about that [punishment] with which you have threatened us, if you are truly one of Allah's message-bearers!" (7:77);**

**But they summoned their [boldest] companion, and he ventured [upon the evil deed], and cruelly slaughtered [the animal] (54:29).**

They justified their crime with the alibi that they needed access to water every day. Even though it was one man who slaughtered the she-camel, the whole society was complicit in the crime because they agreed with and encouraged that act. As it goes with the privileged classes, they never honor their oaths, in this case, not to harm the she-camel. Now these God-denying people were in for it,

**And [Ṣāliḥ] turned away from them, and said, "O my people! Indeed, I delivered to you my Sustainer's message and gave you good advice, but you did not like those who gave [you] good advice" (7:79);**

**And thereupon [Ṣāliḥ] said, "[Only] for three days [more] shall you enjoy life in your homes: this is a judgement that will not be contradicted" (11:65).**

Just as they were warned, after three days they encountered the tremble of a thunderbolt that would burn any object on contact. Some sources say that Thamūd slaughtered the she-camel on Yawm al-Arbi'ā', and the affliction of annihilation occurred on Yawm al-Sabt.<sup>281</sup> Terrible and cacophonous noise accompanied this seemingly natural catastrophe,

**Thereupon a quake overtook them: and then they lay lifeless, in their very homes, on the ground (7:78);**

And a blast overpowered those who had been bent on evildoing: and then they lay lifeless, in their very homes, on the ground... (11:67);

And as for [the tribe of] Thamūd, We offered them guidance, but they chose blindness in preference to guidance: and so the thunderbolt of shameful suffering fell upon them as an outcome of all [the evil] that they had fashioned (41:17);

After they had turned with disdain from their Sustainer's commandment — whereupon the thunderbolt of punishment overtook them while they were [helplessly] looking on... (51:44);

And how severe was the suffering that I inflicted when My warnings were disregarded! Behold, We let loose upon them one single blast [of Our punishment], and they became like the dried-up, crumbling twigs of a sheepfold [pen where sheep are kept] (54:30–31).

This particular cataclysm was both atmospheric and geological. Thunder and excruciating dissonance accompanied by earth tremors and micro-quakes spelled the end of what was just a few days hitherto a “vibrant civilization,” a modernity with unprecedented technology, **“And so it was that Thamūd denied their Sustainer, and so it was that they were banished”** (11:68).

Another of the miracles in this wholesale destruction was the escape of Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims around him. It is said that just before the onset of this apocalyptic disaster they set out for the land of Palestine, as it was a fertile land; and that the total number of this prophetic exodus was around 120.<sup>282</sup> Ṣāliḥ may have seen this happen at a distance as he was instructed to go away and stay away. But in his heart there was a sorrow for his people who were not able to save themselves from this tragic end because they refused to listen, showing no appreciation for what he was trying to do.

Ṣāliḥ's sadness is reminiscent of that of Muhammad (ﷺ) on the day of Badr when the dust had settled and the latter went to the burial site of the *mushriks*, called al-Qulayb; Allah's Prophet said to those who had fought him and perished,

*○ Abū Jahl ibn Hishām! ○ 'Utbaḥ ibn Rabī'ah! ○ Shaybaḥ ibn Rabī'ah! ○ so and so! Are you satisfied for having (dis)obeyed Allah and His Apostle? For we have found what our Sustainer promised us to be true; have you found what your sustainer promised to be true?!*

Abū Ṭalḥaḥ al-Anṣārī, the narrator of the hadith, relates that upon hearing the Prophet's words, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb inquired, "O Messenger of Allah! Are you talking to the decomposed [bodies]? Corpses without spirits in them, having decayed?" And the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) replied, "By He who has my soul in His hand. You can't hear me better than they, but they cannot respond."<sup>283</sup>

### Story of Lūṭ (ﷺ) Demonstrates Homosexuality Is a Malignance

The Qur'anic rendition of human history now advances to the era of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), not necessarily to delve into the particulars of his life, but to continue to highlight the ominous destiny of people who disclaim prophethood and reject scripture. Exposing the intemperate character of such societies not only confirms the *āyah* at the beginning of the *sūrah*, "And how many a society have We destroyed as Our temper came upon them as they were bastioned or as they were at rest" (7:4), but also provides a powerful deterrent against future generations of people repeating the mistakes of their predecessors. It is interesting to note that societies with hundreds of thousands or even millions of citizens can trigger their self-destruction by opposing and denouncing prophets with only a handful of followers.

Prophets Ibrāhīm and Lūṭ (ﷺ) were contemporaries; it is said that Lūṭ was Ibrāhīm's nephew.<sup>284</sup> Allah (ﷻ) illustrates what can happen to a people who underestimate His power presence as they dismiss His authority in their real lives,

And [remember] Lūṭ, when he said to his people, “Will you commit abominations such as none in all the world has ever done before you? Verily, with lust you approach men instead of women: no, but you are people who are profligate!” But his people’s only answer was this, “Expel them from your land! Verily, they are folk who make themselves out to be pure!” Thereupon We saved him and his household, except his wife, who was among those that stayed behind, the while We rained a rain [of destruction] upon the others: and behold what happened in the end to those people lost in criminal sin! (7:80–84).

The story of Lūṭ’s society concerns one of the more grotesque deviations of human nature. An entire, functioning society was overtaken by its sexual perversions, which undermine the sole authority of Allah (ﷻ). Man’s voluntary compliance to Allah acknowledges the way He has formulated and oriented human nature. Only He knows how best to acculturate this human nature so that it can ascend to its divine potential, and thereby fortify man to optimally discharge the weighty responsibility of *khilāfah* on earth. This lofty human nature is what subsequently “fits” into His social regulations and natural laws. Toward this end, it was Allah’s will to create the human species in the alluring and inviting cast of male and female. This dual inversion between the sexes constitutes the symbiotic and mutually beneficial *nafs* (*spirit, vital principle, or animating force within living things*). Life proceeds from this polarity of the sexes via procreation, that is, future generations of “new life” begin with the sexual coupling of male and female. Another way of looking at this is that the male and female complements were designed to induce the activity of conceiving and bearing offspring. A male and a female are “calibrated” for life’s fertilization, both physically and emotionally.

The incentive for conception followed by impregnation has been finely-tuned into the climax experienced by male and female at the peak moment of intimacy. Therefore, the desire to experience that state of ecstasy through sexual intercourse has been deeply

embedded in the nature of both man and woman. This has insured the continuation of the human race, as well as the unfolding of Allah's will in the course of man's finite interlude on earth. The erotic compulsion of man toward woman and vice versa entails the labor and toil that accompanies the rearing of offspring. The euphoric flash of orgasm gives way to extended months and years of pregnancy, birth and labor, and breast-feeding by the mother; and securing a livelihood and providing for a family by the father. The physical and emotional love binding male to female is what undergirds the stability, security, and cohesiveness of a family — the nurturing environment that attends babies into adolescence, and then into responsible adulthood.

Sexual reproduction in organisms proceeds from the union, or fertilization, of gametes (such as eggs and sperm), which are produced by two different individuals (although self-fertilization occurs in a few hermaphrodites such as tapeworms). Most organisms, other than bacteria and cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), engage in some sort of sexual reproductive process. Except in some lower organisms, the gametes are of two distinct types: eggs and sperm. The organisms producing the eggs are called females, and those producing the sperm, males. The fusion of a male and female gamete, called fertilization, produces a zygote, which combines the genetic material contributed by each parent, and thus leads to the development of a new individual. In what is called self-fertilization the male and female gametes come from the same plant; in cross-fertilization they come from different plants. Self-fertilization rarely occurs in animals; usually even hermaphrodite animals cross-fertilize each other.<sup>285</sup>

In terrestrial insects, mammals, reptiles, and birds, fertilization occurs within the female's body; in the majority of fishes and amphibians, and most aquatic invertebrates, it occurs externally, when both sexes release their gametes into the water. In most fungi, gametes are not released, but the hyphae (any of the threadlike filaments forming the mycelium of a fungus) of the two parents grow toward each other and fuse to achieve fertilization. In higher plants, pollination precedes fertilization.<sup>286</sup>

In the preceding *āyāt* of this *sūrah* and those of other *sūrahs*, man has been repeatedly advised to keenly observe and then contemplate his immediate earthly environment in addition to the greater universe as a precondition to his confirming Allah (ﷻ) as the ultimate and only Sustainer; such observations, in particular the ones above, ought to say volumes about the sexual orientation of man as intended by his Creator and Maker. Just as barren land coming back to life after an interval of lifelessness is a metaphor for the resurrection of man, so too is the procreation process in nature for the sexual norms in man. Thus, what is being discussed should be recognized as a *sunnaḥ* (social law) that regulates human behavior. It also divulges the depth of Allah’s wisdom and subtlety in human sexual nature. Any human behavior that seeks to subvert this God-given natural affinity between man and woman becomes a deviation away from His decree and discipline. And if left unchecked and uncorrected, it will eventually turn into a social affliction, potentially capable of destroying the society that allowed it to flourish. The story of Lūṭ (ﷺ) highlights this type of carnal deviation, due to the unprecedented lengths his people went to in their social tolerance, acceptance, and confirmation of homosexuality,

**And [remember] Lūṭ who said to his society, “Do you engage in vulgar intercourse (*fāḥishah*) — [an act] no one else in the world predating you have done? Verily, you sexually turn to men — and not women — but you are a hedonistic people” (7:80–81).**

The *isrāf* (extravagance and excesses) that Lūṭ (ﷺ) is referring to above deals with his society’s runaway desire to engage in same-sex intercourse, as well as the people’s collective willingness to curtail the flow of life in their society. When men begin to look exclusively for men as sex partners, on a large scale as is the case here, the new generation that is supposed to be born will not have a chance to be conceived. What begins as a loose, lawless, and lordless pursuit ends up as a headlong immersion into a progressively uncontrollable carnal desire. Hence, life-giving procreation and



healthy reproduction are supplanted by a socialized drive toward sterility and infertility.

The experience of sexual pleasure by a God-given human nature should correspond, by necessity, with the larger plan of Allah's (ﷻ) social law to foster a future generation without the exclusion of the womb. When human beings, men in particular, can only be satisfied with gender exclusive sexual relations, then their sexual desire does not flow with the regenerative spirit of nature. This runs counter to the grain of the rest of creation, and hence must be classified as sexual perversion. The more that human beings become subservient to it, to the point of trying to “normalize” the behavior as something socially acceptable, the more that moral depravity begins to engulf society.

The female anatomical structure as well as her emotional frame are meant by birth, by nature, and by impulse to correspond to the male anatomy and psychology, and vice versa. In such a fundamentally complementary relationship, the “lust” or “itch” is not the end result of love or sex. Rather, it represents the attraction and allure that are meant to enrich the overall character of male and female and not to enslave it. By understanding this, human sexual relations serve to promote life itself. Thus the moment of sexual climax is viewed within the larger program of social fondness and trans-historical hope. In this larger picture, orgasm is a sort of advance compensation for all the effort that will be required for the upbringing and education of the coming future generations. But when there is no expectation of future generations, sex and sexuality become ends in and of themselves, with lust becoming a deadly sin as opposed to the magnetic spark that bring male and female together. And that is not what God intended, as He has forbidden all kinds of human-animated exclusivism (*‘aṣabīyah*), gender exclusivism included. This means that, despite whatever rationalizations the dominant power culture may choose to dispense (in our day, the in-your-face Hollywood campaign to normalize homosexuality that has been supported and promoted by the policy positions of the US government), a man cannot sexually satisfy a man and a woman cannot sexually fulfill a woman. To the

contrary, such a futile affiliation in man's God-given state of nature would be disgusting.

Today, almost all across the so-called progressive, advanced, and modern part of the world, societies have gone to the extent of legally normalizing homosexuality in the form of state approved same-sex marriages and non-discrimination statutes related to sexual orientation. Such societies force their religious communities, many of whom reject this practice and simultaneously constitute a majority of the citizenry, to keep their views to themselves while publicly acquiescing to what they consider to be socially and spiritually odious. This means that the social "progress" and material "advancement" in the "modern" world, as exhibited by its tolerance and outright advocacy of sexual deviation, translates into no consideration for God and His will, His purpose for life, and His creation of male and female. Nowhere is this refusal to learn from scripture and history more obvious than in those societies that call themselves "Judeo-Christian." Those Muslims who are eager to join the club of "modernity and progress" should take some time to consider the following brief history of the wayward West in dealing with homosexuality; and then filter this information through the confident *āyāt* of the unfaltering Book.

Within every age, culture, nation, and people in the world, women have had a sexual attraction for women and men for men. Social contexts and constructs may have differed, as have interpretations and assumptions. Lifestyles have differed, and the question of identity has had varied responses. Nonetheless, (some) women emotionally and physically love other women and (some) men do so with other men. A general overview of human history indicates this has been the case.

Previous history notwithstanding, lesbian and gay politics are today in an early stage of development. Much "her-" and "his-story" still needs to be uncovered. Experiences from Greek and Roman times, accounts in Buddhist writings, the anti-lesbian elements of witch-hunting in Europe, the same-sex lifestyles in some Indian and African tribes — all await historical recovery. Organized efforts to understand homosexuality and encourage tolerance started around

the turn of the last century. The Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee (Scientific Humanitarian Committee) was founded in 1897 in Germany, and a Dutch branch began its work in 1911. The committee was founded to prove scientifically that homosexuality is a biological phenomenon. Members argued that homosexuals are born as they are — and therefore love between people of the same sex (then called *uranism* or *homosexuality*) should be seen as one of the God-given variations of nature. C.H. Ulrichs and M. Hirschfeld of Germany, and J.A. Schorer of the Netherlands were among the scientific leaders. They organized support among liberal thinkers, artists, and industrialists, and fought against laws criminalizing homosexual behavior (successfully in Norway). An active and fairly open European lesbian and gay subculture thrived at the time, especially in Paris and Berlin. Discussions about decriminalizing homosexuality were held in many European countries — and Poland, for example, passed a new penal code in 1932 that fixed the age of consent at 15 years for both heterosexual and homosexual acts.<sup>287</sup>

With the advance of fascism in Europe, the situation for lesbians and gays was transformed dramatically. In the 1930s the Nazis in Germany closed lesbian and gay bars and sent up to 7,000 homosexuals to jails and later to camps every year. During WWII many lesbians and gays died in concentration camps: estimates vary from 20,000 to 80,000. Homosexual men, mainly, were forced to wear a pink triangle, and lesbians may well have been categorized with prostitutes and forced to wear a black triangle. In the 1980s, Dutch homosexuals collected funds and political support for the Pink Triangle Monument in Amsterdam in order to draw attention to this forgotten group of Nazi victims.<sup>288</sup>

The postwar period renewed some progressive initiatives. In 1946 the Cultural Relaxation Center (COC) was founded in the Netherlands. It is now the oldest lesbian and gay organization in the world. From 1951–1959 the International Committee for Sexual Equality (ISCE), a continuation of prewar initiatives, worked to encourage advances with respect to legal protections.<sup>289</sup>

The more recent history of the movement is framed by the famous Stonewall riots, which took place in New York City on 28

June 1968. In a legal context where anal and oral sex between persons of the same sex was considered a crime in all US states until 1961 (and still in nearly 30 states in the 1990s), the thriving gay subculture was an easy target for police forces out to enjoy some action. During the Stonewall riots gay men fought back against physical assaults. This became the start and symbol of a wave of political activities among lesbians and gays. Every year in many countries all over the world international Gay Pride demonstrations celebrate the Stonewall riots and the subsequent growth in political stature of lesbian and gay organizations.<sup>290</sup>

The political ideology of many lesbian and gay groups that began to emerge in the West in the 1970s was relatively straightforward. Lesbians and gays should be able to live openly and freely and should not be discriminated against, whether in law, at their jobs, or in any social context. Homosexual women and men should be proud of their sexuality, and should not try to hide it or change it. The concept of gay pride was popularized. Discussions about the origins of homosexual orientation (whether there is a biological or a social basis) were considered irrelevant. Modern (Western) homosexuals should be proud of their sexuality and lifestyle, demand equal rights, and show the world who and what they are. The process of informing others and achieving a positive self-image was advanced by public affirmation of sexual and affectional preferences and identity (a process called “coming out”).<sup>291</sup>

It was lesbian feminism that took the political ideology beyond the equal rights issue. Lesbians not only want to claim their own rights and political space, but they challenge the basic assumptions, the social construct, of male and female gender roles. They understand that lesbianism is threatening because it challenges male domination, the traditional division of labor between the sexes. Lesbian separatists choose to spend their energy within a women’s context only, and have created a wide range of choices for women who want to develop privately or professionally through interaction with other women.<sup>292</sup>

By the 1980s, earlier utopian thinking about a lesbian world with its own universal culture had made room for a more realistic

view of the diversity of social and cultural backgrounds, of the range of lesbian political opinions, and of the variety of personal choices and lifestyles. By the start of the 1990s, finding ways to reorganize and come to terms with such differences and to communicate across the barriers of class, race, culture, age, and physical, mental, and economic conditions has become a major challenge for the lesbian community. In addition, political activities against discrimination (such as sexual violence against lesbians and gays) and for equal rights (for example, to have and keep children) continue.<sup>293</sup>

The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA, or IGA as it was called in its first years) was founded in 1978. It aims to exchange information and to coordinate political action. At approximately 30 international and regional conferences the ILGA has inaugurated more than 100 political actions/projects and has helped to produce many reforms:

- a. the World Health Organization (WHO) deleted homosexuality from the tenth edition of its *International Classification of Diseases*;
- b. the Council of Europe passed a 14-point proposal to combat discrimination against homosexuality;
- c. New Zealand reformed its laws (1986) so that homosexuality is no longer a criminal offense; and
- d. Amnesty International decided in 1990, after a decade of discussions and much lobbying by ILGA members, to include in their target groups men and women who are imprisoned because of their sexual preferences.

In addition, the ILGA aided in the publication of two international *Pink Books*, which provide an inventory of the legal and social position of lesbians and gays throughout the world. The work of the ILGA has been recognized by the United Nations, which is expected to grant the ILGA observer status. This will permit the organization to participate in the ongoing debate about human rights.<sup>294</sup>

Lesbians have organized internationally within the ILGA, as well as in the ILIS (International Lesbian Information Service). Its basic ideology is that enforced heterosexuality is a problem for

every woman who has not had the opportunity to choose how she wants to live. Thus the ILIS demands that girls and women have the right to control their own bodies, to receive information/education about lesbian lifestyles, and to organize and be protected from criminalization and discrimination. The increased information about violence (mental, physical, and sexual) and the oppression of women helps dramatize the struggle lesbians face when they try to live autonomously or to organize. In addition to its European-based conferences, ILIS (and thus lesbian) visibility was increased during the UN Women's Conference and the NGO forum in Nairobi (1985). The ILIS made contact with a number of Latin American lesbian groups (Brazil, Chile, Peru) who supported the first lesbian conference in Mexico (1987). Since then lesbian organizing in the region has increased considerably.<sup>295</sup>

A more recent development was the first Asian lesbian conference in Bangkok (1990). Lesbian visibility within the Asian context has proved to be difficult and dangerous, but networking has begun. In Africa, where in some cultures marriages between women are recognized and where emotional and physical contact between girls is fairly common without its being defined as homosexuality, the first lesbian groups also are emerging, although they usually operate underground.<sup>296</sup>

The AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) crisis has had a profound effect on the gay community, especially in the United States; though it has lost many of its leaders, it has rallied to a large extent. Organized support, such as buddy systems, has been impressive and is having a more general effect on health services. In countries where (homo)sexuality was a taboo topic (such as Peru), AIDS prevention projects are having a much wider social effect. Sexual choice has become part of the public and political debate and, for instance, the Peruvian organization *Movimiento Homosexual de Lima* (Homosexual Movement of Lima) enjoys an unusual popularity at all levels of society.<sup>297</sup>

As more information about violence against women is collected, the right of women to self-determination is becoming a recognized human rights issue. In this area, and in efforts to increase awareness

of the need for international cooperation to understand cultural difference as a positive force, individual lesbians and the lesbian movement are strongly and visibly represented. The enormous changes in Eastern and Central Europe and the unification of much of Western Europe in the European Community provide important opportunities for the strengthening of the lesbian/gay movement.<sup>298</sup>

The movement can grow — but only if its political clout increases. In order to increase political recognition of the rights of lesbian women and gay men and bring their ideas to the forefront of public awareness, the lesbian and gay political movement is slowly professionalizing. In the last few decades most of the organizational work was voluntary — and in many lesbian and gay organizations this is still the case. But as the lesbian and gay agenda receives more recognition as an important civil rights movement, funding is also being made available, and the political impact of the lesbian and gay lobby should become even more noticeable.<sup>299</sup>

The above represents a thumbnail view of the overall homosexual special-interest group and lobby in the world. To bring a pertinent fact to light, the aggregate number of homosexuals all over the world does not exceed that of the widows and orphans, especially now in the aftereffects of the imperial wars of dislocation in the Muslim East and Africa. But why is there more clout and influence behind the advocacy of homosexual “rights” than behind the universally recognized rights of orphans and widows? Is there even a movement, much as the gay rights movement, to advocate for widows and orphans — one that is both funded and populated as a civil rights struggle? Can there be some truth to the fact that certain special-interest groups, particular political classes, and a superstructure of Yahūd stand to gain from societies divorced of their scripture and peoples separated from their prophets? This question is fair and legitimate in light of Muslim populations losing their political structure and thus having no more positive influence to radiate to the rest of the world. This *tafsīr* has already covered Jewish dominance and overrepresentation in finance, media, and organized crime; consider below the Jewish influence in mainstreaming sexual perversion in the United States and beyond,

The announcement in Israel's *Haaretz* newspaper that a new memorial to "homosexuals persecuted by the Nazis" will be built in Tel Aviv at a cost of \$42,000 (no doubt ultimately financed by the American taxpayer) has highlighted the important role played by Jewish Supremacists in promoting homosexuality in western nations.

According to the *Haaretz* report, "Tel Aviv has over recent years become noted as one of the world's most gay-friendly cities, with a popular [gay] pride parade and thriving LGBT community. M.K. Nitzan Horowitz is currently running to become the city's first openly gay mayor."

The cause of homosexuality is hotly debated: many argue that it is something with which certain people are born, while others argue persuasively... that [it] is a learned behavior which is greatly influenced by the environment — in other words, that a great many homosexuals are homosexual because of the permissiveness and open promotion of that lifestyle by the media and popular culture.

There has to be a great deal of the truth to the latter claim, although most certainly there is at least a small element of truth to the "born that way" argument as well, as anyone familiar with "effeminate" men and "butch" women can confirm.

Whatever the cause, one thing is however very clear: Jewish Supremacists are unquestionably the major driving force behind the promotion of, the legal sanction of, and the active encouragement of homosexuality in modern society. What are the facts about Jewish Supremacists and the promotion of homosexuality?

1. In May 2013, US Vice President Joe Biden "lauded the influence of Judaism on the United States, specifically mentioning the efforts of Jews on gay rights issues," according to the *Jerusalem Post*. "Biden pointed to American television sitcom *Will and Grace* — whose protagonists are a gay lawyer



and his Jewish best friend — alongside social media, as examples of game-changing factors in the battle for gay marriage rights. ‘That’s what changed peoples’ attitudes,’” the *Jerusalem Post* reported.

2. The *Jspace* Jewish news network reported in June 2013 that “Jewish Groups [were] celebrating the ‘significant victory’ for gay marriage.” According to the *Jspace* report, “Jewish leaders were already stepping out to lend congratulations and messages of solidarity,” following a US Supreme Court ruling on homosexual marriage.

“The decision came at a 5–4 split, with all three Jewish justices — Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, and Elena Kagan — voting with the majority. Likewise, the suit challenging the 1996 federal DOMA [Defense of Marriage Act] inclusion was brought to the Supreme Court by a Jewish plaintiff, Edith Windsor,” *Jspace* reported.

“‘There is no more central tenet to our faith than the notion that all human beings are created in the image of the Divine, and, as such, entitled to equal treatment and equal opportunity,’ the Union for Reform Judaism said in a statement.

“Those thoughts were echoed by a host of other Jewish organizations, from the Rabbinical Assembly and American Jewish World Service to the National Coalition of Jewish Women.

“The overwhelming Jewish support reflects a national trend. A 2013 Pew Research study found 76 percent of Jews support gay marriage, a number larger than even that recorded for self-described liberals, which came in at 74 percent. Similarly, three of the four main sects of Judaism — Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist — ordain openly gay rabbis, and also allow its rabbis to perform gay marriage ceremonies,” the *Jspace* article said.

3. The National Jewish Committee is behind continuing efforts to force homosexuals into the Boy Scouts movement of America, the *JWeekly* Jewish news service reported in May 2013. “In February, the National Jewish Committee on Scouting voted overwhelmingly to urge an end to such discrimination in the scouting movement. That same organization will continue to lobby for further liberalization of the scouts’ bylaws, to allow the admission of openly gay Eagle Scouts and gay scout leaders,” *JWeekly* said in its article.

According to an article in the *Times of Israel* from May 2013, “Jewish Scouting leaders are taking a vocal role in efforts to pass a historic resolution that would partially lift a ban on gays in the Boy Scouts of America.” The same month, the Boy Scouts of America voted to lift the ban on homosexuals.

4. The leading Jewish Supremacist pressure group, the ADL [Anti-Defamation League], has, according to its own website, a “longstanding commitment to protecting civil rights, particularly those that affect the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community.”

“For nearly twenty years, ADL has ardently advocated in the courts on behalf of LGBT rights. ADL has filed amicus briefs and joined coalition briefs on issues that directly affect the LGBT community. This has included filings on the appellate levels in both state and federal courts. ADL has filed amicus briefs in a number of cases urging courts to hold a ban on marriage equality unconstitutional, and has been a strong voice advocating against measures to deny that fundamental right” and the “ADL has emerged as the nation’s leader in crafting and advocating for inclusive state and federal hate crime laws,” that organization boasts.

5. The *Jerusalem Post* reported in February 2013 that the “The Anti-Defamation League has brought together a number of religious and Zionist organizations in what it is calling a ‘broad coalition in support of marriage equality.’ Among the Jewish groups that have joined the ADL’s coalition are the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Women of Reform Judaism, Hadassah — The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Truah: Rabbis for Human Rights — North America, and the Women’s League for Conservative Judaism.”
6. The remarkably long list of Jewish Supremacist activists in the homosexual movement is also serious reason for concern. A comprehensive list of prominent activists [is] too long to include here... Some of the more prominent — and particularly repulsive specimens — are:
  - Larry Kramer – cofounder of ACT UP, a homosexual/AIDS activist organization; also cofounder of the Gay Men’s Health Crisis.
  - Alan Klein – cofounder of ACT UP; cofounder of Queer Nation; National Communications Director and chief spokesperson for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).
  - Arnie Kantrowitz – cofounder of GLAAD.
  - Jonathan D. Katz – founded and chairs the Harvey Milk Institute, the largest homosexual studies institute in the world; a long-time gay political activist who also cofounded Queer Nation.
  - Israel Fishman – founder of the Gay Liberation Caucus in 1970, now known as the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table.
  - Bella Abzug – first member of the US House of Representatives to introduce legislation ban-

ning discrimination based on sexual orientation [1974].

- Len Hirsch – president of the LGBT federal government employees group, GLOBE.
- Kevin Koffler – editor-in-chief of *Genre*, a gay magazine.
- Judy Wieder – editor-in-chief, *The Advocate*, a gay magazine.
- Barney Frank – member of the US Congress; helped create non-discriminatory employment policies in all US federal agencies.
- Evan Wolfson – senior staff attorney for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the executive director of Freedom to Marry.
- Allan Ginsburg – Jewish poet and leading member of North American Man Boy Love Association.
- Roberta Achtenberg – civil rights lawyer and federal official; appointed as Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity by President Bill Clinton in 1993.

7. It is well known that Jewish Supremacists dominate the pornography industry. According to the *Jewish Quarterly*, Winter 2004, “Jews played [and still continue to play] a disproportionate role throughout the adult film industry in America. Jewish involvement in pornography has a long history in the United States, as Jews have helped transform a fringe subculture into what has become a primary constituent of Americana.”

The *Jewish Quarterly* goes on to state that the two most dominant players in the porn industry — which includes a massive homosexual output — are “Jewish Clevelander Steven Hirsch, who has been described as ‘the Donald Trump of porno’” who

“runs the Vivid Entertainment Group, which has been called the Microsoft of the porn world, the top producer of ‘adult’ films in the US” and “Seymore Butts, aka Adam Glasser... a 39-year-old New York Jew” who runs “one of the largest franchises in the adult-film business.” The *Jewish Quarterly* also added that “Jews accounted for most of the leading male performers as well as a sizeable number of female stars in porn movies.”

Even from this necessarily brief roundup, it is clear that Jewish Supremacists have played, and still play, the leading role in promoting homosexuality in western society. This fact alone, quite apart from any others, should provide all Gentiles with pause to reconsider lifestyle choices in matters of sexuality. Jewish Supremacists never do anything that is not primarily against the interests of Gentiles and in the interests of Jews.

It is far more likely that the open promotion of this lifestyle forms part of a comprehensive “divide and conquer” strategy by the Jewish Supremacists against their most prominent of self-chosen enemies: European western society and its standards and norms. By encouraging a “bloc” of [politically-savvy] homosexual activists, the Jewish Supremacists have created yet another “minority” group to agitate and divide the power structure of any potential opposing forces.

It is a tactic which is as old as Judaism itself.<sup>300</sup>

Similarly, the Israeli/Jewish propensity to declare war on God was in the forefront of the dogged pursuit to normalize sexual perversion in interwar Germany,

When the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, homosexuality among males was not just a taboo subject, it was effectively illegal. Paragraph 175 of the German

criminal code, the anti-sodomy law, had been established in 1871 and held a firm place in German law. This paragraph did not make homosexuality illegal per se, however, it did make the physical act of sexual intercourse between males illegal. Once the Nazis took control of the state they were quick to amend the paragraph. This new paragraph not only made the physical act of penetration illegal but all acts that could suggest homosexuality, such as a kiss, hug, touch or a look that was deemed inappropriate. The revised paragraph was promulgated on 28 June 1935 and became effective on 1 September. It states, "A man who commits sexual indecencies (*Unzucht*) with another man or lets himself be abused for sexual indecencies shall be punished with imprisonment." It is important to note here that female homosexuality was not addressed within the original law or in the subsequent reform of the paragraph. Lesbians were not seen as a real threat to German society since they were still able to produce offspring. Male homosexuality posed a larger threat to National Socialist ideology. The Aryan masculine ideal was one of physical and mental strength that put German society before their own desires. In the Nazis' view male homosexuals were the antithesis of this ideal. They were seen as weak and effeminate, as slaves to their physical urges, and as unlikely to fulfill their duty to German society and reproduce.

Despite Paragraph 175, homosexuality began to flourish in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century. Berlin had become the epicenter of an openly gay culture, with approximately forty gay bars located throughout the city. This was permitted due to the tolerance of the Berlin police force. As long as the culture stayed to itself and remained invisible to the public eye then they were allowed to live relatively unharmed. It was in the midst of this subtle tolerance that the homosexual rights movement began to gain strength. At the

forefront of this movement and the campaign to remove Paragraph 175 was Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld.

As a Jewish homosexual and sexologist, Hirschfeld had been an active participant for homosexual rights since the late nineteenth century. In 1897 he created the first gay liberation organization in Germany known as the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* (Scientific Humanitarian Committee). The Committee became the first face of the rights movement in Germany. In the foreword of the first publications of *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (*Yearbook for Intermediate Sexual Types*), the Committee presented itself and the publication as having three main goals: working towards the abolishment of Paragraph 175, informing opinion on homosexuality and as a source of interest to not only doctors and lawyers, but also homosexual men and women. These goals aligned with Hirschfeld's personal motto, "*Per scientiam ad justitiam*: justice through knowledge." Hirschfeld wanted to use science as a means to create a wider understanding of homosexuality and to end discrimination and homophobia.

In the same year that the Committee was formed, it immediately orchestrated an active petition campaign to amend Paragraph 175. If they had succeeded, the amendments would have legalized homosexual acts among consenting adults, while cases involving the use of force or coercion, minors under the age of sixteen, and public displays would still remain illegal. Despite nine hundred signatures, the petition failed when brought to parliament in 1898. Only one party in the Reichstag supported the Committee's objectives, the Social Democrats, led by August Bebel. The Social Democrats were the only party who did not see the petition and its aim as contemptible. The petition went to the Reichstag once more in 1905 with Bebel's support, yet once again it failed. The petition ran for several more years and continued to gain support. By 1914, several thousand signatures, many of

which were from doctors and university professors, had been added. Many of the Jewish academic elite supported homosexual rights. Among the signatures to be found on the petition were several prominent Jews including, Max Brod, Martin Buber, Albert Einstein, Grete Meisel-Hess and Stefan Zweig.

When active, the Committee was permeated with a strong Jewish influence. Kurt Hiller, a Jewish homosexual with a doctorate in law, joined the Committee in 1908. Ten years later he joined the board of directors and became co-chairperson in the late twenties. Hiller, like Hirschfeld, was a strong presence in the Committee and prominent in the fight for homosexual rights. Due to his commitment, the SS stormed and searched Hiller's home on 7 March 1933. Several days later, on the twenty-third, he was arrested and sent to the Oranienburg concentration camp, near Berlin, where he was severely mistreated and tortured. Under unknown circumstances Hiller was released from the camp nine months later. He immediately left Germany and eventually arrived in London. Richard Plant suggests that Hiller's incarceration at Oranienburg was the first step in the campaign to rid Germany of its homosexuals.

When Hiller became more prominent in the Committee, Hirschfeld took a lesser role and started on his next endeavor, the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute for Sexual Science), which he opened on 1 July 1919 in Berlin. Hirschfeld bought the building for the Institute using his own money, which allowed him full range on how it was organized and managed. The Institute was not connected to the Committee and therefore operated independently, although the Committee did have an office in the Institute's building. The Institute was used in a variety of ways and was opened to the public. It functioned as a research institute, clinic, lecture hall, library, and archive for an invaluable collection of



biological, sociological, anthropological, ethnological, medical, and statistical documentation relating to sexology. With this Institute, Hirschfeld continued to educate the public on homosexuality through science until it was abruptly closed. On 6 May 1933 at 9:30am a crowd of students raided and destroyed the Institute. Over 10,000 books and documents from the Institute's library and archives were stolen. Four days later the stolen books and documents were brought to Opernplatz and were burned alongside other works that Nazi ideology deemed degenerate. Hirschfeld had just completed a world tour and was in Paris when the Institute was broken into. A week later he watched the destruction of his life's work on a newsreel in a Paris theatre. He chose not to return to Germany and died of heart failure on 14 May 1935, his sixty-seventh birthday.

Although an influential figure in homosexual rights, Hirschfeld was often seen as controversial when it came to sexology and the science of homosexuality. His *Zwischenstufentheorie* (intermediate stage theory) of sexuality held that there were four clearly distinguishable sexes. Hirschfeld argued that homosexuals made up a third sex, neither male nor female. They were biologically distinct and contained aspects of both genders. Hirschfeld's theory was not well received among his academic peers and was in dispute with many other scientists and sexologists. According to Max Hodann, one of Hirschfeld's colleagues:

Hirschfeld's work was more unwelcome to the political reaction in Central Europe than even Sigmund Freud's. He was simply labeled as a "propagandist for homosexuality," and the anti-Semitism so strongly developed in Germany, even before Hitler's advent, was also an element in consolidating opposition to his work.

The conservative sexologist Albert Moll, who was also Jewish, took a particular dislike toward Hirschfeld's problematic nature and progressive views. Despite their opposing ideas, their field eventually fell into discredit because of their Jewish background. According to Erwin Haeberle, "When Hitler finally took over the government, all sexological work, progressive and conservative, suffered restrictions, because it was largely conducted by Jews." While several fields in Germany suffered losses with the expulsion of their Jewish practitioners, the fields themselves were still considered creditable. In contrast, the field of sexology lost its creditability and suffered due to its Jewish practitioners.

Unfortunately, this connection between the Jews and homosexuality only proved to be detrimental to both. The link between the two gave the Nazis ample opportunity to degrade both groups by using one against the other. For those "Aryans" who were anti-Semitic, yet had no particular feelings toward homosexuals, the Nazis used propaganda to show that homosexuality was a Jewish perversion. On 2 August 1930, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, a Nazi newspaper, wrote:

Among the many evil instincts that characterize the Jewish race, one that is especially pernicious has to do with sexual relationships. The Jews are forever trying to propagandize sexual relations between siblings, men and animals, and men and men. We National Socialists will soon unmask and condemn them by law. These efforts are nothing but vulgar, perverted crimes and we will punish them by banishment or hanging.

The Nazis were able to use this "logic" in reverse as well. For those who were homophobic and had no

radical opinion about the Jews, the Nazis were able to argue that the disease of homosexuality was rampant in Judaism. The regulations of Paragraph 175, laid out in Paragraph 175a, further stipulated punishment for a man who coerces other men through force and threats, abuses a relationship of dependence or seduces boys under the age of twenty-one for sexual indecencies. Paragraph 175b condemns human and animal sexual relations. Using Paragraph 175 of the penal code to persecute homosexuals and label them as degenerates, it was an easy step for the Nazis to use propaganda, such as the *Völkischer Beobachter* article above, to show that Jews were the seducers of the young and innocent and held the same perversions as homosexuals. For those who were not homophobic or anti-Semitic, these corrupt associations could be used as a way to scare the society into hostility toward both groups or at least foster a dangerous indifference to their fates.<sup>301</sup>

Why is there an aggressive worldwide movement to empower lesbians at the same time that there is an equally pugnacious movement in the world to disempower *muḥajjabāt* (Muslim women who honor their scriptural dress code)? In the public eye, why are there no statistics delineating the association between moral decline and escalating criminal activity on the one hand and libertine, loose, and lesbian women on the other hand, as opposed to the opposite with modest, appropriately dressed, and cultured women? Is the information industry afraid of facts and data that would shed some much-needed light on this subject?

Some Muslims tend to mix up the reliable information of this infallible Qur'an with the suspect Judeo-Christian version. With the short summary below, any thinking person should easily be able to contrast what Allah (ﷻ) says about this matter with what has become the predominant civilization's narrative about Lot, homosexuality, and Allah's fitting punishment. Like its twin, Gomorrah, the legendary city of Sodom is described in the Book of Genesis

(10:19) as lying at the southeastern border of Canaan. Identified with Lot, the nephew of Abraham (ﷺ), Sodom carries the abiding image of Sin City, “But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly” (Genesis, 13:1–13). Sodom is one of the five cities that fight a losing battle in the region of the Dead Sea against the four kings of the East (Genesis, 14:1–24). Attempts to locate Sodom either alongside or under the southern end of the Dead Sea have not, however, brought any trace of it to light.

In the famous account of Abraham’s bargaining session with Yahweh over the fate of Sodom, the Lord agreed to spare the city if as few as 10 righteous people could be found there (Genesis, 18:16–33). But chapter 19 reveals that not even this small number of devoted subjects would turn up. Sodom’s fate was finally sealed when the two angels who had visited Abraham (ﷺ) and Sarah in the previous chapter were trapped in Lot’s house by men who intended to homosexually abuse them (that is, they wanted to “sodomize” them). Yahweh urged Lot and his household to flee from the impending destruction of Sodom; when Lot’s wife looked back at the spectacle of Sodom’s demise, she immediately became a pillar of salt (Genesis, 19:26).

In the majority of the ensuing biblical references, Sodom is used together with Gomorrah as a metaphor for utter human depravity. In a curious reversal, however, the Prophet Ezekiel favorably compares Sodom with her “sisters” Samaria and the harlot Jerusalem, to provide a standard against which the even greater wickedness of his contemporary community could be dramatized. Similarly, Jesus (ﷺ) warns the cities in which his miracles had been performed that “...if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.” (Matthew, 11:23). The destruction of Sodom by fire and brimstone is an analogy for the day the Son of man is to appear (Luke, 17:29–30). That analogy is echoed when the fire that punished Sodom and Gomorrah is called “eternal” (Jude, 7).

The rapidly degenerating dysfunction between the sexes occurred when the Judeo-Christian society in the US blinded itself to the understanding of sex in whatever they could salvage of their

original scripture. From 1945–1965, America passed through what sociologists call “the golden age of marriage,” when the average age of first marriages fell to record lows for both men and women, and the proportion of adults who were married reached an astronomical 95%. The America of Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy was to some people a vibrant, dynamic nation. But, as Allan Carlson, president of the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society, writes,

All the indicators of family well-being abruptly turned in these places [Western nations] during the short 1963–1965 period. Fertility resumed its fall, tumbling well below zero-growth levels; a massive retreat from marriage commenced; and Western societies seemed to lose all sense of inherited family order.<sup>302</sup>

Dutch demographer Dirk van de Kaa traces the phenomenon to four transformations:

1. shift from the golden age of marriage to the dawn of a new age of cohabitation;
2. a shift from a time of “king-child” with parents to that of king-parents with one child;
3. a shift from preventive contraception to benefit parents; and
4. a shift from a uniform family system to a pluralistic system of families and households, including single-parent families.<sup>303</sup>

The reasons for the drop-off in birthrate that began in the mid-1960s can probably explain the tectonic shift in attitude of American and Western women away from having children. What ideas did the baby boomers bring to maturity? What ideas did they absorb in college?

The baby boomers arrived on campus in the Fall of 1964. They were the first American generation with the freedom to choose how they wanted to live their lives. In the 1930s, college had been a privilege only a few could afford. Family decisions were imposed by family hardships. If the breadwinner lost his job, sons

and daughters could forget about college; they had to quit school and find work. Tens of millions still lived in small towns in rural America, where the Great Depression had hit the farms long before the 1929 Crash hit Wall Street. After Pearl Harbor, the war and war economy made the career decisions for America's young. The Silent Generation of the 1950s grew up with parents, teachers, and clergy still as authority figures. Not until 1957 did Professor Galbraith discover that Americans were all living in "the Affluent Society."<sup>304</sup>

But the parents who had gone through the Depression and WWII were determined that "my kid's not going to have it as rough as I did." So the baby boomers were raised differently, spending almost as many hours in front of a television as in school. By the mid-1950s, parents had a serious rival for their children's attention, and youngsters had an entertaining and witty ally, and a privileged sanctuary to retreat to, in the age-old struggle against parents. The message that came from television, especially the ads, was instant gratification.<sup>305</sup>

By 1964, the year of Mario Savio and the Free Speech movement at Berkeley, when the first wave of boomers hit the campuses, never having known hardship or war, it was ready to rock. And though much historical analysis blamed the student riots and rebellions on Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, and Vietnam, this is simply inadequate — for student rebellions were not confined to America. They broke out across Europe and even in Japan. As the 1968 Days of Rage tore apart the Democratic Party in the streets of Chicago, Czech students who made the Prague Spring were facing Russian tanks, Mexican students were being shot down in the streets of the capital, and French students almost seized Paris from President de Gaulle. What baby boomers had in common with contemporaries abroad was not Vietnam, but their numbers, affluence, security, and freedom, and the televised example of their peers all over the world. In childhood, they all had the same babysitter — television — a babysitter more entertaining than their parents. Its incessant ad message was the same, "Kids! You need this — now!"<sup>306</sup>

With millions of young women “liberated” from parents, teachers, and preachers, with money to burn, and with the *in loco parentis* authority of dons and deans crumbling, the revolutions rolled over the campuses: the antiwar movement (“Hey, hey, LBJ/ How many kids did you kill today?” and “Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh/ The NLF is going to win!”); the drug revolution (“turn on, tune in, and drop out”); and the sexual revolution (“make love, not war”).<sup>307</sup>

Then came the women’s movement, modeled on the civil rights movement; it won converts even in Middle America. As African Americans had demanded equal rights with whites, women demanded the same rights as men. They would accept nothing less than full equality. If the boys can sow their wild oats in frat houses and singles bars and with one-night stands, why not us? But as nature did not design the sexes that way, and the consequences of promiscuity are unequally borne by women, in the form of babies, solutions had to be found. The magic of the marketplace did the rest. If you forgot to take the pill, or the contraceptive did not work, the local abortionist would not fail.<sup>308</sup>

The old sanctions against promiscuity collapsed. Nature’s sanctions — unwanted pregnancy and fear of disease — were taken care of by the pill, available abortion, and the new miracle drugs. And so, the need for shotgun marriages was now a thing of the past. One teary-eyed trip to the Center for Reproductive Rights gets the job done. The fear of social stigma and loss of reputation was lifted by a popular culture that celebrated the sexual revolution and applauded as “swingers” girls who in the 1940s and 1950s might have been called less attractive names. The moral strictures — the sense of shame and sin, of violating God’s law, of risking one’s immortal soul — were eased by a new breed of “Are-You-Running-with-Me-Jesus?” priests and pastors who won huge popularity by explaining that He (or She) was just not that kind of “judgemental” God and, hey, “Hell is only a metaphor!”<sup>309</sup>

Not only did the old sanctions collapse, a new way of measuring morality emerged to justify and even to sanctify “doing one’s own thing.” Under the new code, morality was now to be determined not by who slept with whom or who inhaled what —

trivial matters of personal preference — but by who went South for civil rights, who protested apartheid, and who marched against the “dirty, immoral war” in Vietnam. As has often been true in history, a new moral code was crafted to justify the new lifestyle already adopted. As they indulged themselves in sex, drugs, riots, and rock and roll, the young Jacobins had the reassurance of their indulgent and pandering elders that, yes, indeed, “This is the finest young generation we have ever produced.” Earlier generations that had lived through a revolution had expressed much the same sentiments.

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young, very heaven!

burbled the great Wordsworth of an earlier revolution that turned out rather badly.<sup>310</sup>

Challenging Professor Samuel P. Huntington’s thesis of a coming “clash of civilizations,” James Kurth wrote in *The National Interest* that Huntington’s batteries, like the guns of Singapore, are pointed in the wrong direction,

The real clash of civilizations will not be between the West and one or more of the rest. It will be between the West and the post-West within the West itself. This clash has already taken place within the brain of Western civilization, the American intellectual class. It is now spreading from that brain to the body politic.<sup>311</sup>

Like colon cancer, the long-term threat to the West lies deep within, and whether the West survives is a question Western peoples will answer. As Pogo said, “We have met the enemy and he is us.”<sup>312</sup>

The revolution has thus far triumphed, but its tenure, like that of Danton and Robespierre, may be brief. The “civilization” it is creating cannot endure. Like heroin, it gives a good high, but imbibed too deeply, it kills. Six hundred Americans died of AIDS in 1983; hundreds of thousands, if not millions, have since died. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, who carry HIV (human immun-



odeficiency virus) are kept alive only by daily “cocktails” of miracle drugs. The sexual revolution has begun to devour its children. The statistics on abortion, divorce, collapsing birthrates, single-parent homes, teen suicides, school shootings, drug use, child abuse, spouse abuse, violent crime, incarceration rates, promiscuity, and falling test scores show how the American society, in which the cultural revolution is ascendant, is decomposing and dying. Empty nurseries and full waiting rooms outside the psychiatrist’s office testify that all is not well. But before this diseased culture runs its course, it may take the West down with it.<sup>313</sup>

The point of no return has been reached. When atypical and irregular folks think they are “natural” and “straight” and then make fun of scriptural male-female relations, then this means that the will of Allah (ﷻ) is pending. Going from our contemporary world back in time to the generation of Lūṭ (ﷺ) would not have been much of a stretch were it not for the fact that the unconfirming and subnormal human behavior of his people had the “freedom” to express itself, **“But his people’s only answer was this, ‘Expel them [Lūṭ and his followers] from your land! Verily, they are folks who make themselves out to be pure!’”** What do the bleeding-heart liberals have to say about this? The “underdog” homosexuals, once they have the upper hand, will not hesitate to turn their wrath on scriptural people and pelt them with ridicule and threats.

As Allah’s words have reiterated on several occasions before, societies at odds with Him and His Writ will battle tooth and nail with His subjects. Is this not a fact of life today? Establishments and governments of worldly folly routinely persecute “clean people of scripture” in their livelihood, in their civil status, in their access to employment, in their relationships with other people, and in every way possible. An officialdom of filth cannot tolerate the presence of people of scripture, to wit their charge of homophobia against all proto-Islamic societies. But, in the final chapter of this incompatibility and incongruity, Allah’s will has the final say,

**Thereupon We saved him [Lūṭ] and his folks — except his wife, who was among those that stayed behind —**

the while We rained a rain [of destruction] upon the others: and behold what happened in the end to those people lost in crimes [of the flesh] (7:83–84);

And so, when Our judgement came to pass, We turned those [sinful towns] upside down, and rained down upon them stone-hard blows of chastisement pre-ordained, one upon another, marked out in your Sustainer's sight [for punishment of such as are lost in sin]. And these [blows of God-willed doom are never far from evildoers! (11:82–83);

And We turned those [sinful towns] upside down, and rained down upon them stone-hard blows of chastisement pre-ordained (15:74).

Personal freedom cannot be an excuse for moral perversion. Homosexuality is wrong. There is no other way to look at it. People can either refer to Allah (ﷻ) and His guiding Book on this matter or to the nonsense of those who want to legalize aberrant sexual practices. Intimate relations with the same sex is both sinful and criminal. It also can destroy societies in the same way that termites eat away a house from the inside, until it is too weak to stand on its own. Homosexuality along with its companion social jaundices of greed, drug abuse, drunkenness, and arrogance comprise the toxic brew that is seismically fracturing the stability and security of the decadent, hedonistic, and God-spurning West. This provides another reason for Muslims to acquire power and then exercise it in a way that makes it impossible for homosexuality to inform human behavior and social norms.

### Shu'ayb (ﷺ), the Prophet of Economics

In these narratives of the ruin and destruction that befell social orders opposed to Allah's power presence, His authority, and His prophets, the last installment focuses on Madyan and its approachable prophet Shu'ayb,

And to [the people of] Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu'ayb. He said, "O my people! Conform unto Allah alone: you have no deity/authority other than Him. Clear evidence of the truth has now come to you from you Sustainer. Give, therefore, full measure and weight [in all your transactions], and do not deprive people of what is rightfully theirs; and do not spread corruption on earth after it has been so well ordered: [all] this is for your own good, if you would but commit [to Allah].

"And do not lie in ambush by every road [that leads to the truth], threatening and trying to turn away from Allah's path all who have committed to Him, and trying to make it appear crooked. And remember [the time] when you were few, and [how] He made you many: and behold what happened in the end to the spreaders of corruption! And if there be some among you who have come to believe [and commit] to the message I bear, the while the others do not [similarly] believe, then have patience in adversity until Allah shall judge between us [and them]: for He is the best of all judges!"

Said the elites among his people, who gloried in their hubris, "Most certainly, O Shu'ayb, we shall expel you and your fellow commitment-bearers from our land, unless you indeed return to our ways!" Said [Shu'ayb], "Why, even though we abhor [your ways]? We should be guilty of blaspheming against Allah were we to return to your ways after Allah has saved us from them! It is not conceivable that we should return to them — unless Allah, our Sustainer, so wills. All

things does our Sustainer embrace within His knowledge; in Allah do we place our trust. O our Sustainer! Lay You open the truth between us and our people — for You are the best of all to lay open the truth!” But the elites of his people, who were bent on denying Allah [His authority and power] said [to his followers], “Indeed, if you follow Shu‘ayb, you will, most certainly, be the losers!”

Thereupon a tremor overtook them: and then they lay lifeless, in their very homes, on the ground — they who had contradicted Shu‘ayb — as though they had never lived there: they who had contradicted Shu‘ayb — it was they who were the losers! And he turned away from them, and said, “My people! Indeed, I delivered to you my Sustainer’s messages and gave you good advice: how, then, could I mourn for people who have denied the truth [pertaining to Allah’s authority and power?]” (7:85–93).

Compared to the stories of the four preceding societies — those of Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Lūṭ (ﷺ) — the story of Prophet Shu‘ayb’s society is quite a bit longer. Some of the *āyāt* above deal not only with the ideological component of man’s relationship with God, but also with a practical and transactional one that alludes to what may be called today a legal standard in society. Nonetheless, like the narratives of those previous societies, this one begins in the same way,

And [We sent to] Madyan their brother Shu‘ayb. He said, “O my people! Conform to Allah for you have no deity/authority except Him (7:85).

This is the pivotal constituent of the different cycles of history. Every cycle, its peculiar historical details notwithstanding, ends when the society in question repeatedly denies the power and authority of Allah (ﷻ), “Truly, evidence has come through to you from your Sustainer.”

Prophet Shu'ayb (ﷺ) is mentioned 10 times throughout the elaborate Qur'an: 7:85, 88, 90, 92; 11:84, 87, 91, 94; 26:177; and 29:36. Islamic historical references indicate that Shu'ayb was sent to the Arabic-speaking people in a time period preceding Mūsá's mission to Pharaoh, but after the time of Lūṭ (ﷺ). That Shu'ayb came before Mūsá can be deduced from the *āyah*, "**Then We sent after them Mūsá with our *āyāt* to Pharaoh and his elite...**" (7:103), where the words "after them" refer to the five prophets Nūḥ, Hūd, Šāliḥ, Lūṭ, and Shu'ayb (ﷺ). Some historians have also said that Shu'ayb's time came after the Children of Israel had gone to Egypt, during the time period between the death of Yūsuf and the advent of Mūsá (ﷺ). It is mentioned in some Islamic historical sources, though such information is not easily verifiable, that Madyan (or Madyān) refers to a son of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) who used to live in what would be in today's geography the region of Ma'ān, which is located in the southeastern part of today's Jordan, on a route into the Ḥijāz. This area, not far from the Levant, includes the Gulf of 'Aqabaḥ, covering parts of southern Palestine.

In a relatively short period of time, the people of Madyan abandoned the *dīn* they had inherited from Ibrāhīm (ﷺ). Not only did they assert a deity besides Allah, but as a result, they were also known to surreptitiously tip the trade balance in their favor and fraudulently conduct their financial transactions. Hence, Shu'ayb (ﷺ) was sent to implore them to acknowledge and affirm the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and, thereby, be completely above board in their market activities. Shu'ayb warned them of the serious consequences of their market manipulations. In fact, he stated his case so eloquently that the *mufasssīr* Ibn Kathīr called him *khaṭīb al-anbiyā'* (the prophets' orator).

In an effort to discredit him through a public campaign, Shu'ayb's own people retaliated by openly accusing him of being a liar and a libeler; they counseled their own to avoid Shu'ayb as he would get them to abandon their *dīn*, their well-established order, and their economic system, "**If you are to follow Shu'ayb you will be the losers.**" As is always the case when there are "radicals" who try to "subvert" the status quo, the full weight of the political and

economic establishment goes into a media frenzy to stigmatize the “radicals” and denounce the “subversives.” In the case of Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) and his followers, the political and financial classes of his day started to place economic constraints on these fair-minded citizens by restricting their ability to make a living. This has a parallel in our times as the Islamic movement and Islamic state have to withstand sanctions and overcome embargoes that would typically bring others to their “senses.” Much like their counterparts today, the self-satisfied financial barons of Shu‘ayb’s time sang the same tune,

**They said, “O Shu‘ayb! We do not understand much of what you are saying; and we certainly feel that you are powerless among us, and if it were not for your flock we would have stoned you, for you are not dear to us” (11:91).**

In stepping up their public offensive against him, they proceeded to mock Shu‘ayb’s *ṣalāh* and trivialize his specialized knowledge of their practices; however, their contemptuous tactics only inspired him to carry on exhorting them to depart from false gods and irreverent deities, and to urge them to be evenhanded in their market practices as well as impartial in their mercantile exchanges,

**They said, “O Shu‘ayb! Is it your *ṣalāh* that orders you to tell us to part with the way our forefathers devoted themselves [to God], or not to do with our money what pleases us? You are most certainly forbearing, the only right-minded man!?” (11:87).**

When Shu‘ayb was unmoved by their reproaches and could not be outwitted by the rhetoric of their “experts,” the elites turned to threats and terror tactics. Failing in that as well, these market manipulators and monopolists finally arrived at an ultimatum: either Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims with him would have to return to the *dīn* of the establishment and its governmental system, or they would be banished. So Shu‘ayb responded in a manner that

simultaneously reproved them while exonerating his own, “[Are we to go back to your errant ways] even though we deplore it?”

In the end, it was Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) who turned the ultimate threat against the deniers in his own people,

**And, O my people, let not [your] dissent from me drive you into sin, lest there befall you the like of what befell the people of Nūḥ, or the people of Hūd, or the people of Ṣāliḥ: and [remember that] the people of Lūṭ lived not very far from you! (11:89).**

The verbal and emotional climax of disagreement between societal *kufr* and community *imān*, which translated into Shu‘ayb and his fellow Muslims having to endure persecution, was followed by Allah’s decree of destruction: a boom accompanied by a *rajfah* (tremor). Some Muslim scholars say this may be an earthquake; or it may refer to a tremor or a geological phenomenon in the form of a jitter or spasm,

**They [Shu‘ayb’s society] contradicted him, so they were overtaken by the flutter and shock, and then they lay lifeless, in their very homes, on the ground (29:37).**

After Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) and the trusted Muslims with him were saved from this natural disaster by the will of Allah (ﷻ), he was sent to Aṣḥāb al-Aykaḥ (the People of the Timberland), who lived in a territory dense with trees and forest. It may have been at a relatively close distance from Madyan. When Shu‘ayb once again pursued his mission of justice and fair trade with these people, they in turn accused him of being a liar. They had a hard time believing him to be a prophet as he was a mortal just like them, “**They said, ‘You are but a practical joker; and you are nothing but a human just like we are. We think that you are a prevaricator’**” 26:185–186). It should be mentioned here that some *mufasssirs* consider the people of Madyan and Aṣḥāb al-Aykaḥ to be one and the same.

Like all others before them who had demanded some outlandish occurrence as proof of prophethood, they disdainfully demanded from Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) to have pieces of the sky fall upon them. They were demonstrating how pigheaded they could be in persisting with the old ways despite the fact that they were being destroyed by them. In this instance, their sarcastic entreaties for their self-destruction were answered, for they were overwhelmed with the torment of the Occasion of Zullāḥ, when seven days of scorching heat made their water boil, followed by a cloud, which they thought would give them relief from the heat, but which in actuality rained fire upon them, incinerating them in the process, **“And they contradicted him [Shu‘ayb] and were thus overtaken by the torment of the Occasion of Zullāḥ (the Overcasting). It was, indeed, a torment of a tumultuous Day” (26:189).**

Allah’s words here disclose that evidence came to this particular society; however the nature of that evidence or what evidence Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) presented to his society to demonstrate he was a prophet is not mentioned. Be that as it may, Shu‘ayb’s society was nonetheless put on notice because of its unfair, dishonorable, and unethical economic practices. Per these *āyāt*, economy cannot become a platform to project social imbalance on earth. Rich and poor economies existing simultaneously, or in other words class-influenced economies, breed behaviors of theft and piracy, both feeble attempts by the dispossessed to equilibrate the balance of wealth between the haves and have-nots. The more permanent solution is for the social conditions of man to become subject to Allah’s command and authority — the counsel Shu‘ayb was giving to his people. This is why predator economies show little tolerance for committed Muslims who want justice to take its economic as well as social course,

**Be fair in your volume and weight measurements, and do not cheat people of what is rightfully theirs, and do not stimulate corruption on earth after it was [ordered] in good measure. That is best for you if you were [to be] committed Muslims. And do not lie in ambush by**



every route [that leads to justice], threatening and trying to divert from Allah all who are committed to Him, and trying to make it [commitment] appear improper. And remember [the time] when you were few [in numbers], and [how] He increased you [in numbers]. And behold what happened in the end to those who stirred up corruption (7:85–86).

Reading these *āyāt*, the bottom line is that the business and merchant class (often the same as the ruling/luxury class) of Shu'ayb's society did not comply with the authority and power of Allah (ﷻ) alone. It was comfortable running afoul of Allah's authority and dominion. Hence, in their day-to-day marketplace and fiscal activities they were routinely applying their own man-made laws to the exclusion of God's mandated laws. They felt at ease formulating secular laws to abet the exaggeration of self-interest rather than godly laws to preserve justice for the well-being of all. Thus, their demeaning of God was not necessarily a religious departure from His divinity as much as it was an economic departure from His authority. This is why much is said here about their buy-and-sell character.

Obviously once the commercial and money-making laws are set to favor the luxury and capital classes of society, they are generally attended by the repercussions of inflation and deflation, recession and depression that will eventually take their toll on one or the other society around. This level of societal corruption is what leads to the wealth polarization that differentiates out classes, with those in the "higher" classes using their wealth status to harass and mistreat the justice-seeking Muslims therein. The course of justice is frank and straightforward; but Shu'ayb's society and all its replicas throughout time — societies that want to cheat, to deprive people out of something that is legally theirs, to pay laborers less than the value they produce — prefer a legal course that is full of twists and turns, tricks and tactics, secrets of the trades that will render their commercial competitors or counterparts less eligible, less equal, and finally less human than they are supposed to be.

The way out of this economic morass concentrates on restoring human nature back to its wholesome relationship with Allah (ﷻ), its Creator and Originator. And so Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) called upon his people to realign themselves with Allah, to comply with His words, and to agree to His authority and no one else’s. In such a healthy relationship, worldly power and influence belong to Allah and not to an influential commercial class or elitist club. In this vein, Shu‘ayb tried to gain their confidence by reminding them of how Allah had favored them, how they had been few in number (and thereby insecure) and then Allah had increased their numbers (leading to prosperity and temporal power), **“And remember when you were few and He augmented you.”**

Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) followed up his attempts at persuasion with a warning, **“And see [for yourselves] how the outcome of corruption peddlers was.”** He realized how society can grow impatient with individuals and communities that step outside of its particular financial and economic culture. He wanted his society to be tolerant of the fact that some of its own can part with its false authority while accepting Allah’s firm authority. Other than to assuage a fading sense of self-importance, they had no reason to tighten the economic screws on a community of committed covenant-bearers who were now beginning to see things in a new light. In typical fashion, as borne out throughout the history of man, the elites and their hangers-on who refuse to yield to Allah’s authority are so closed-minded that they cannot abide others in society who have broken away from their deceitful *din*.

**And if there be some among you who have come to believe [and commit] to the message I bear, the while others do not believe, then have [enough] patience until Allah shall judge between us [and them]: for He is the best of all judges! (7:87).**

This is not an insignificant argument. The dividing issue here defines who will have money and how they will have it. This subject is very sensitive to those who are in control of the money supply.

For them, justice (or religion) and its social advocates are not supposed to enter into the field of economics; this has been the language of the elites from at least the time of Shu'ayb (ﷺ).

The allocation of scarce resources among competing ends, the creation and distribution of wealth, and population income are all matters that dwell in the deepest thoughts of God's people on earth. The elites may have a type of "father figure" in whom they consider to be their first major economist, Adam Smith, and his economic theory of the classical school (equilibrium), which dominated their thinking until the 1930s. The main change in thinking at that time was the result of works by John Maynard Keynes, whose economic theories attempted to solve the problems of depression and economic stagnation. After 1945, the main aim of economic policy was to maintain high employment levels. Inflationary pressures were a test of Keynesian economics: monetarist theories were popular in the 1970s as an attempt to reduce inflation, but these are now believed to have contributed to the high levels of unemployment seen in the early-1980s. Two main aspects are often recognized. *Microeconomics* is the study of the economic problems of firms and individuals, and the way individual elements in an economy behave (such as specific products, commodities, or consumers). *Macroeconomics* is the study of the social order or country as a whole, including such matters as trade, monetary policy, prices, national income, output, exchange rates, growth, and forecasting (econometrics). Particular concerns are how to manage an economy to achieve high growth, low inflation, and high employment; and, for individual firms, to predict those economic factors that will affect them in the future, thus enabling them to improve their own planning.

This lesson is not a simple matter of some obscure prophet in Arabia at an unknown time in history trying to convince his people to "worship" an abstract God in heaven. This lesson revolves around the fact that the God of man is the God of man's general economic activities. God-yielding people cannot "believe" in an intangible God and then forget about His authority in their lives — an authority that is supposed to be anchored in their conscience

and found in their heart. Thus, Shu'ayb (شُعَيْب) wanted his people to begin by knowing and admitting the sole authority of Allah (الله), which is integral and central to His divinity. In doing so, they would have to abandon any commercial practices that were customized and institutionalized to permit trade and commerce policies known to be unfair, partial, and biased.

The word *economy* is derived from two Greek words, *oikos* and *nomos*, which together refer to the ordering of the household. Economic life, in ancient Greek society, fundamentally centered around the management of households as, in a certain sense, it still does. The term came to be used by early Christians as one of the metaphors for God's rule, as in the New Testament reference to the "household of God" (Ephesians, 2:19) in which all Christians have membership. The term *ecumenical* (from the Greek word *oikoumene*) thus refers to the inclusive household of God in which Christians are to reflect the unity of the household, despite theological conflicts and denominational differences. The biblical theme of *stewardship* follows closely from the Greek *oikonomos*, for the latter can be taken to mean the management of the material affairs of the household by a "steward" appointed to that task.<sup>314</sup>

In contemporary usage, the economy is the sum of the institutions and processes for the production and distribution of scarce values. Economic systems vary greatly, both historically and in the contemporary world. But all economic systems organize the production and distribution of scarce quantity values. The latter include, most obviously, material goods, such as food, clothing, shelter, aesthetic objects, playthings, implements, vehicles, etc. Such material necessities as air and water normally have existed plentifully enough that they are not thought of as "economic" goods — but even air, at least pure air, is sufficiently scarce that costly measures to preserve its purity are very definitely a part of the economy. The economy also includes non-material values, such as patents, copyrights, and legal options in a capitalistic definition of things. Anything that is valued but is also inherently limited in supply is at least potentially economic by nature.<sup>315</sup> The intellectual justification of the economic character of a society was the under-

lying departure point between Shu'ayb (ﷺ) and the one-sided commercial and economic preferences that defined his society's policies and procedures. And so, as Allah's prophet, he had to expose his society's financial misdealing.

Economic thought encompasses ideas about work, including specialized roles and socializations. It includes thought about social rewards or punishments designed to motivate or regulate production and distribution. Disputes over wealth and poverty, especially whether great disparities of wealth and income are morally acceptable, are perennially important in economic thought within a materialist and capitalist way of life. Economic thought includes conflicting interpretations of the proper role of government in economic life: should the public own all or most of the instruments of production and commerce, or should government seek to control the business cycle? Should it redistribute wealth and income? Should it prohibit certain forms of commerce? How far should government go in advancing a nation's economic interests in international competition?<sup>316</sup>

In a world responsive to Allah (ﷻ) and His apostles, the economic outline of human activity is meant to secure justice for all. And the first expression of this was by Prophet Shu'ayb (ﷺ). Most theological concepts have some bearing upon economic issues. This may be especially true of doctrines of creation having to do with divine purposes expressed through the created, tangible order. A key question here is whether divine intent is self-evident in the structures of nature, in some variation of natural law doctrine, or whether human perceptions of the natural order are ultimately governed by divine revelation. Doctrines of sin and grace, with variant conceptions of the limitations and possibilities of human nature, are pertinent to questions of economic incentive and economic power. Doctrines of stewardship and vocation in the Western world express the accountability of human economic interests and activities to God.<sup>317</sup>

This secular, Western world has been the pacesetter for at least the last 200 years, especially given that an Islamic form of government has not been consolidated to the degree to which it can

exert a global impact on the allocation of resources and the guidelines for economic justice. Therefore, in order to speak about it from a Qur'anic standpoint, it becomes incumbent upon the Muslims to alert their minds and conscience to the economic thrust originating in the West.

Prior to the 18th century in Europe and its sphere of influence, economic thought was not considered to be distinct from theology, philosophy, and ethics. Ancient Greek philosophy dealt with questions of property, work, poverty, and commerce in relation to political and moral philosophy. Thus, Plato's communal economic theories are an aspect of his views of the well-ordered society, as explored in *The Republic*, and Aristotle's rejection of lending money at interest (usury) is an aspect of his overall philosophy of ends. The Hebrew prophets understood poverty and economic exploitation through the damage done to human beings in community, a moral sensitivity also embodied in Hebrew law codes. Christian patristic (Church fathers') writings almost uniformly treat economic selfishness as a serious spiritual issue, while raising searching questions about great disparities of wealth and income. Until the 16th century, Christian thought generally followed Greek and Hebrew precedence in condemning usury, defined as the taking of interest for loans, despite the inconveniences this imposed upon commerce. Until well beyond that century, it would have been unthinkable to have treated economics as a separate, independent sphere of human knowledge.<sup>318</sup>

To deconstruct the predatory policies of a capitalist-run world economy, unfortunately there are no working Islamic minds who can step up to the financial and economic facts of the day and expose the disparities and contradictions that fly in the face of almost any definition of justice. The near nonexistence of independent Islamic thought has produced academic Muslims who argue for state control of the economy on the one hand, and their counterparts who argue for a market flow of the economy on the other. However, both these arguments come not from an autonomous understanding of the Muhammadi heritage, Qur'anic research, or the experiences of Muslim history, but from an uncritical and servile lionization of the "leadership" of those who ran away from God.

Even as they are not capable yet of theorizing an Islamic economic system independent of the Western world's economic woes, they still lag behind in a most profound way because they have not demonstrated the capacity to at least throw some light on the disagreements and inadequacies of the current deplorable economic establishment, which has gained prominence over the past four to five formative centuries.

Be that as it may, such an independent conception of economics began to emerge in the 18th century, with the development of mercantilist theories and, especially, with the publication of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). While he was himself both a clergyman and moral philosopher, Smith laid the foundations for independent economic thought by asserting the independence of economic life. His view that the public good would best be served through a free market in which all participants sought their own self-interests (the "invisible hand") was a big step toward severing the relationship between moral virtue and economics.

Much of the 19th and 20th century debate over theology and economics in the materialistic West has been defined by the relative independence of economic thought. Even Marxist socialism, perhaps the most radical alternative to Smith's free market vision, assumed the independence of economics. For the past two centuries, Christian thought has wavered between capitalist and socialist poles, but it has found difficulty in trying to subordinate either capitalist or socialist theory within a broader theological perspective. Christian socialist tendencies during those centuries have been represented by the Briton F.D. Maurice, the American Walter Rauschenbusch, the Swiss Leonhard Ragaz and, more recently, the Liberation Theologians of Latin America and other parts of the world. Christian capitalist thought has been represented during this period by the 19th-century bishop, William Lawrence (USA), and 20th-century Anglo-American neoconservatives like Robert Benne (USA) and E.R. Norman (UK), although most 20th-century Christian economic thinking has supported capitalism to some extent.<sup>319</sup>

Much of the 20th-century Christian economic thought has been summarized in documents of the Ecumenical Movement

(Protestant and Eastern Orthodox) and in papal encyclicals (Roman Catholic). While the former have generally been influenced more by socialist tendencies and the latter have reflected a more conservative orientation, both the ecumenical movement and Roman Catholicism have sought to recover a central place for theological reflection in economic thought. Both have insisted that economic life must be judged not by economic performance alone but by the concrete effects of policies and practices upon human beings. Both have been explicitly critical of the easy Smithian assumption that the market mechanism, left alone, will automatically yield social justice and human well-being.<sup>320</sup>

Theology, at least from a Judeo-Christian struggle with the issue, has had an important impact upon economics at six points,

1. The most decisive question is whether theology can affirm the material world, as such, at all. Earliest Christianity confronted that issue through the Docetic controversy, in which some Christian thinkers treated the material world as fundamentally alien to the life of the spirit. Had that view prevailed, Christianity would have developed in radically different ways, if it could have developed at all. Christian orthodoxy, however, stayed within the inherited Jewish mainstream by continuing to affirm that “the earth is the lord’s, and all that is in it” (Psalms, 24). The New Testament letter to the Colossians expressed this by identifying the God of Jesus with the creation of “things visible and invisible” and by asserting that in Jesus (☩) “all things hold together” (Colossians, 1:16–17). By affirming the world and identifying its creation with the same God who is met in Christ, Christians paved the way for a more detailed theological analysis of how different aspects of the material order, including economic institutions and practices, advance or impede God’s purposes.<sup>321</sup>
2. Granted the theological importance of the material world, the central economic tasks of production follow. If basic needs are to be met, there must be adequate quantities of food, clothing, shelter, medical supplies, and the related instruments of production, transportation, and communication. People must be



trained and deployed adequately to provide production and services. Fulfilling the needs of production can also give rise to dilemmas. For example, in order to stimulate production, incentives may have to be offered that undermine people's sense of community. Some harmful products may perform desirable economic functions. Theological analysis, therefore, must attend to the specifics of production.<sup>322</sup>

3. Production of goods and services can thus be seen as an important sphere in which people respond to or resist God. Economics is an important part of the stage on which human interaction with God is played. Since the Reformation it has become more and more acceptable theologically to refer to economic activity as a part of human vocation and even to think of human creativity as participation in the creative work of God. Not every form of work can be characterized as a "calling," but many can. On the other hand, many forms of work having no significance in the economic exchange system could be a part of one's calling when understood theologically. For example, there might be no financial compensation for visiting somebody in a hospital or providing leadership for a neighborhood youth group. But such activities are, in the fuller theological sense, also expressions of Christian vocation.<sup>323</sup>
4. If economics has important effects upon individuals, it is equally true that it affects interpersonal relationships and the life of whole communities. According to much theological thought, the relationships bonding human beings to one another in community are ultimately an expression of man's kinship with God. The material infrastructure of a community — its roads, parks, utilities, educational facilities, public transportation, courts, museums — is a major aspect of a community's economy. But real community is also related to the economic opportunities of its people and the extent of economic inequalities dividing them. The American Catholic bishops' economics pastoral made this point in proposing a community participation criterion of an acceptable economy: to be acceptable, an economic system must enable all within

a society to be participants (Roman Catholic Bishops, US, 1986). By this standard, poverty is morally significant not only because its victims' material needs are not met but also because the poor cannot be in normal social relationships with the rest of the community.<sup>324</sup>

5. Some theological views are entirely human centered, but there is a greater tendency in the late-20th century for theologians to think of the cosmos as a value to God quite apart from humanity. The issues to which this change of orientation points to are complex; they at least mean that humanity has great stewardship responsibility for its own environment. Such stewardship is also a point of economic accountability, and it occasions dilemmas, as, for instance, when environmental stewardship threatens industries basic to needed production and to the provision of jobs.<sup>325</sup>
6. All economic life also entails the distribution and exercise of power. Economic power conveys power over the lives of people and, commonly, over political institutions. Theological support for civil rights and equitable distributions of political power also imply broad distributions of economic power. The ideological debates between supporters of socialism and of capitalism may not be as readily resolvable theologically as some Christians hoped. But the debate itself helps illuminate the centrality of issues of human power as expressed through economics.<sup>326</sup>

The economy, in whatever form it has taken, has always been an important aspect of human existence, and economic life has generally been a central part of social thought. But a closer look at "Christian" economic thinking reveals that it has been shaped to fit contemporary socio-economic realities. The Islamic approach, however, requires the Muslims' confidence in Allah (ﷻ) to remake human realities in a way that brings them in line with His will, which demands justice for all.

The dramatic and unexpected collapse of Soviet and Eastern European Marxist socialism at the beginning of the 1990s has fundamentally altered late-20th-century Christian discussion of eco-

conomic issues. Whereas only a few years earlier, socialism had captured the imagination of large numbers of Christian intellectuals, the changes in Eastern Europe abruptly undermined confidence that socialism really could be the wave of the future. The free market mechanism, already dominant in North America and Western Europe, became overnight the economic panacea of the formerly socialist countries as well. The effects of the historic transformation have not been limited to the ideological debate between capitalism and socialism as such; they have also placed a cloud over governmental involvements in economic life, for whatever purpose.<sup>327</sup>

That cannot long continue. For one thing, the free market mechanism has manifestly failed to undergird basic human values at a number of points, such as the elimination of poverty, the provision of healthcare (in free market situations like the USA), and the conservation of the environment. For another thing, the market mechanism cannot be sufficiently responsive to the will of the community unless government is permitted to play a significant economic role. The changed world situation does mean, however, that Christian economic ethics have new issues to think through. Socialist Christians may need to take new stock of the inventive and productive successes of the free market and ask, in new ways, how those values can best be preserved in a broader economic design. Capitalist Christians, on the other hand, may need to take the failures of the market more seriously while asking how successful aspects of the socialist agenda can be affirmed.<sup>328</sup>

Meanwhile, global economic development is proceeding rapidly. Christian economic thought, if it is to participate responsibly in the conversation over the terms of that development, needs to recognize the enduring reality of transnational corporations, the continued injustice and instability of global economic disparities of wealth and income, and the intimate relationship between global economic insecurities and political tensions. The new global situation requires creative new thinking about how an international economic order can best be structured.<sup>329</sup>

The time is quickly approaching when either the Muslims will have to step in and fill this void or the social accumulation of in-

justice will trigger enormous calamities, reminding them of the natural disasters that brought about the end of ancient societies and civilizations. If the committed Muslims continue to keep their Qur'anic mind and prophetic experiences at a distance from the economic policies by which their societies seek to attain economic affluence, to correct a disequilibrium in their balance of payments by protecting the home market, or to open up foreign markets through unilateral or bilateral governmental action, then they will be nothing more than accessories to this dysfunctional and decaying status quo. Muslims more concerned with rituals than with reality have a hard time ascertaining the in-built inequalities of their countries' economic nationalisms and the endemic discrimination of the worldwide multilateral trading system with its free flow of trade and free convertibility of currencies.

The vast majority of Muslims today live within dictatorial economies characterized by extensive governmental control of trade and the subjection of economic matters to the overriding considerations of political or military policy. Techniques employed by such states pursuing policies of economic nationalism include austerity programs, barter arrangements, currency depreciation, exchange controls, export subsidies, licensing, quota restrictions, and tariffs. These official policies are still off-limits in Islamic conferences, Islamic symposia, and Islamic lectures. The simple fact that a state cannot routinely pursue policies of economic nationalism without inciting retaliatory action from other states that have suffered harm from such policies is not a "thinking point" that runs across the minds of committed Muslims nowadays. This is a shame when we are supposed to be familiar with Prophet Shu'ayb (ﷺ) and the societies that were ruined because they did not heed Allah's authority, which does not permit temporal authorities to get away with self-centered, class-centered, or race-centered economics. The great danger is that, once started, the process tends to escalate, with action and counteraction building up to the point of stifling any transactions between societies and peoples.

Throughout the various discourses about Shu'ayb (ﷺ) and his people in the Qur'an the parochial, traditional explanations em-

phasizes the chronology of the narrative, crime and punishment; that is,

1. the assertion that Shu'ayb was a prophet and a messenger who was sent to Madyan and Aṣḥāb al-Aykaḥ;
2. the description of Shu'ayb's people as *kāfirs* engaged in offensive activity, inclusive of foul commercial practices;
3. Shu'ayb's personal qualities of determination, patience, perseverance in warning his people of dreadful consequences; and
4. Allah (ﷻ) ultimately destroying his society, and with His grace and mercy, saving Shu'ayb and those with him.

However, this approach misses out on the central theme that is reiterated ad infinitum in Allah's Book. The thoughtful and practical understanding of the impasse between these prophets and their self-centered societies is much more serious than the traditional generalization would have one believe,

**The elites of his people, full of hubris, said, “O Shu'ayb! We will of a certainty oust you and those who are committed with you from our country, or you may indeed return to our commonwealth (7:88).**

This is how systems, establishments, and governments reply to those whom they consider to be “national security threats.” The Muslims, sooner now than later, will have to come to understand this social rule as they understand a mathematical “fact.” These Prophets of Allah (ﷻ) were understood, perceived, and defined as threats to the national security of their own peoples. Had the prophets been helpless and defenseless, why would the elites be threatening to throw them out of their country, out of their constituency, and out of their commonwealth? In this instance, Shu'ayb's contention with his own social superstructure went to the core of life itself: the economic practices and policies that were void of Allah's authority, hence full of injustice and iniquity.

The upshot of this ever-recurring phenomenon is that maximalist governments and regimes end up controlling societies. Once

there appears within these societies “radical prophets” who want to refer people to Allah’s authority these regimes try to convince such radicals that they should stop their “extremist rant.” If this tactic does not work against the “radical saint” as he continues expressing his justice-centered message with all the confidence and courage that he has in Allah (ﷻ), then these governments turn to his followers and try to persuade them to give up on this “lost cause.” These powers in office will use everything at their disposal, threats as well as incentives, to silence these followers. Here is where they offer mansions or torture chambers — to be hushed up either by favor or fear. The fact of the matter is that these tyrannical regimes have no strong argument for their case. They do have, though, strong-arm tactics that they use ruthlessly and endlessly. Once committed Muslims make up their minds to advance their refreshing and pacesetting ideas to the public, they will have to be prepared to sacrifice and struggle until Allah’s decree takes its course.

**“Except if Allah wills, for Allah has encompassed all with His knowledge.”** A committed prophet and a committed Muslim are sure of their rejection and opposition to abusive, concentrated, and inordinate power (*ṭāghūt*). But when it comes to the will of Allah (ﷻ), they stream with it as He has the knowledge of everything all the time,

**In Allah we have placed our trust. O our Sustainer!  
Induce a breakthrough between us and our people on  
the basis of truth and justice; for You are the best to  
do so (7:89).**

In history, the gap between these two opposing forces has always led to a rupture that can never be bridged. It makes no sense to build a bridge between God and Satan when one side has firmly made up its mind that it will not compromise God’s principles and the other side has made up its mind that it will never concede to God’s authority. Those who are committed to Allah (ﷻ), always in the company of Allah, never doubting the conclusion on Allah’s terms, do not waver in their expressed principles. Prophets were al-

ways wise but they were never diplomats (to negotiate away principle); they were always practical but never politicians in the current common usage of the word. Prophets were men of God and not functionaries of governments. Anyone who reads the Qur'an without being pre-programmed to spin its meanings knows this fact very well.

The matter of Shu'ayb (ﷺ) is yet another demonstration of a showdown between an Islamic movement's prophet, as it were, and the same time proven behavior of nonrepresentative, elitist governments. These governments spell out their animosity: one of their own will either have to be thrown out of the country or have to reintegrate into its structure and standards. A government does not usually do such things against individuals who are "preaching morality" and minding their "personal business." Rather, it does these things to people who are advocating Allah's authority and trying to bring justice to "public business,"

**Said [Shu'ayb], "Why, even if we abhor them [your substandard structure and your iniquitous standards]? We should be guilty of blaspheming against Allah were we to return to your [business-as-usual] ways after Allah has saved us from them. It is not conceivable that we should return to them — unless Allah, our Sustainer, so wills. All things does our Sustainer embrace within His knowledge; in Allah do we place our trust. O our Sustainer! Cause a breakthrough between us and our people on the basis of truth and justice — for You are the best of all to do so" (7:88–89).**

This encounter and disagreement between the two sides is both historical and current. Then as now, justice and injustice are irreconcilable. The deniers of Allah (ﷻ) know this very well. Because these two sides are not meant to live together, the establishmentarian regime threatens its "dissidents" with ejection, expulsion, and banishment. At one point in this running contention the elites feel the vulnerability of their position, even though they have the ma-

terial wherewithal and the pronounced power, **“And the elites of his people who were in denial of Allah’s power and authority said, ‘If you [the masses of people] are to follow Shu‘ayb you will indeed wind up losing.’”**

This is the divide that distinguishes those who want to be in the company of Allah (ﷻ) from the “pious” pretentious Muslims. When the line was drawn between the government and its society of injustice on one side and the few, powerless followers of the prophet on the other side, no prophet ever backed down in the face of the authoritarian elites, saying in effect that the latter would be deluded if they thought the former would return to predatory business practices and the attendant lifestyle. This means that the threat of expulsion, eviction, and exile had no impact on prophetic psychology and its “protocol” of communication with these elites,

**We would be dishonest to Allah [and liars on His behalf] if we were to reintegrate into your way of life [and lifestyle] after Allah has rescued [and delivered] us from it (7:89).**

In today’s re-enactment of these opposite sides, there are establishments, such as the one in Saudi Arabia, that are trying to reform and rehabilitate those who have taken issue with the governmental *tāghūt*. Predatory financial systems, like the one in Arabia, will make room for those who “repent” on their terms without the Qur’anic and prophetic flare to change the prevalent economic system into one that recognizes the authority and power of Allah (ﷻ).

**“It does not behoove us [Shu‘ayb and his followers] to reintegrate into it [your plundering and pillaging financial system].”** It takes more than accurate information to stand your God-given ground in the face of elites, establishments, and empires. This was the principled position of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) when he stood on the high ground against the seemingly powerful words of officialdom. His, and theirs (those who carried the covenant before him), was not a simple struggle. The facts are clear, but the burden of these



facts becomes problematic for the “free riders” — those who will go with the Islamic program so long as there are no threats.

The “system” turned against the Islamic movement of Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) because he was giving answers it did not want to hear, and he was expressing principles and not politics, the whole truth and not half truths. These are the determined spirits that are needed in today’s showdown with capitalism and Zionism. Shu‘ayb could return to today’s world and find that nothing has changed. There exists a class of rulers that breaks from God’s authority, improvises a set of rules and regulations for itself, and sets out into the markets of the world to take more than it gives, to monopolize the resources it takes over, and then to convert entire populations into cheap labor and a global market place of consumers. All of this, of course, is done within an overall strategy of mass communication and concepts and ideologies that can win over certain countries with tons of carrots. Those who resist, however, can expect to be the victims of tons of bombs until they are finally subdued to capitalism and reintegrated into a commonwealth opportunistically decorated by such words as freedom, liberty, and democracy.

Even so, one thing is for sure: once truth and justice stand up to and are differentiated from lies and injustice, and both positions are clearly at odds in the public realm, at that time Allah’s *sunnah* (social law) will unfold. No civilization or society can get away with its systematic persecution of Allah’s Prophets (ﷺ) and people. This is what triggers the ultimate punishment of total devastation and the fall of such civilization, **“And they [the society of Shu‘ayb] were overwhelmed with the tremor/vibration and they were left lifeless in their habitation.”** What an irony: the elites and officials said that Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) and the commoners around him would be the losers, yet, **“Those who contradicted Shu‘ayb — as if they were in transit — those who contradicted Shu‘ayb they were the losers.”**

The essence of Shu‘ayb’s narrative comes down to money. And money, of course, represents a great source of privilege and advantage in a materialistic society; and the lack of it quite the opposite. This is as true for governments as it is for individuals. The

richest countries have the greatest room to maneuver in deploying resources to meet needs. When needs are greater than the resources to meet them, especially if available resources have been squandered, the debt trap awaits. The problem gets worse when loans are used not for investment — to create future benefit — but for current spending, to meet the needs of today, or to pay off the problems inherited from the past. Then each additional loan gives no relief; it just drives the debtor further into the trap.

International debts and the interest on them have to be paid in a currency that can be used internationally — hard currency. For developing countries, this means exporting commodities and using the earnings for the debt payments. Several governments of developing countries found for a long time that one of the few exportable commodities with which they could earn hard currency was hardwood, so they cut down tropical forests, destroying their natural environment (and a potential source of future wealth) and contributing to the global problem of deforestation. Within a purely money-based view of the world, however, there is nothing wrong with destroying forests to earn the foreign currency to make the debt payments. Everybody would be acting optimally for his own interests, and as long as market prices are paid and there are no corrupt dealings at this level, what could be wrong with that? If the forest is worth anything, somebody will pay to grow it back again.

A similar perspective can be brought to bear on the drug trade. For a Colombian peasant or an Afghan farmer, all other things being equal, the coca bush and the opium poppy are most favorable crops. Thanks to the fact that they are in demand in the consumer countries, prices can be kept high; despite their illegality the market is large and, from one place to another, either stable or growing. In a world that has taken God and conscience out of the market, this would be considered economically sensible behavior, and what could be wrong with that? Of course, there are corrupt dealings, as well as a great deal of violence, but plenty of economic activities have unwanted side effects and continue nonetheless. There are, as the capitalist argument goes, good profits to be had in all the different links of this chain.

Moving further in this direction, perhaps this logic can be extended to the trade in people. Those who make profit out of transporting people in dangerous conditions to countries where they may be able to find a job but are unlikely to find a welcome, could doubtless insist that trade is trade and profit is profit and all to the good. Most people, however, would draw the line at human trafficking, even if they let the debt system and the drug trade slip through their moral net. The argument may seem blindingly obvious, yet it is nonetheless worth making, for many aspects of how world trade is regulated today are driven by a claim that all trade is good and the freer it is from regulation, the better. There are, indeed, good reasons in economic theory, buttressed by experience, to show that very intrusive government intervention in trade in the form either of subsidies for exports or of import barriers tends to be wasteful and counterproductive. But that is a pragmatic, empirical argument. It is different from a moral claim about trade as such. Trade is good or bad depending on what is traded or how it is traded, in the same way as money is good or bad depending on how it is used.

The theoretical ideologues of free trade would presumably not take their creed so far as to justify human trafficking or the illicit drug trade. Hence, it is strange to see them finding it hard to understand that other kinds of trade can also rightly be regulated and, if need be, restricted to protect nature and guard human rights, especially in poorer countries. The Qur'an means to open our eyes on how economies turn into networks and syndicates for the elites when their societies and governmental systems "trash" the authority of God as they assuage their otherwise untroubled conscience by giving a few cents to their own racial or national poor while stealing budgets and treasuries from other races and nations.

A couple of the ironies of this predatory imbalance include the fact that more than half of the top economies in the world are corporations, not countries; and the average inhabitant of the world's richest country is over 100 times wealthier than the average inhabitant of the poorest. But then the Muslims have to face up to the fact that they are not a Qur'anically thinking mass of people.

Even though today, there are a growing number of committed Muslims, they still do not constitute the critical mass that will in the end carry the day and nurture humanity back to its consciousness of Allah's authority and ever-present power.

As these *āyāt* speak about fair trade, not many Muslims are driven to create an impression about trade in their own world. Some countries are so dependent on exports and imports that the value of their international trade exceeds that of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP). And with globalization, many of the wealthier countries have experienced a major increase in the scale of their international trade, which has grown much faster than their economies overall. Yet, the United States, the powerhouse of the world economy and the fulcrum on which many economies balance (or come unbalanced), has a relatively low engagement in international trade. This, it appears, gives the US stability and a capacity to recover quickly from the downturn at the end of an economic cycle.

Countries with small economies, heavy trade dependence, and reliance on agriculture have been hit by a change in the world market that has made fertilizers more expensive relative to agricultural products. Poor countries often find themselves saddled with debts taken on by their former rulers, forced to commit large parts of their earnings from exports to keeping current on usury payments. Irresponsible lending in the late-1970s and early-1980s is as much a cause of the problem as irresponsible borrowing. But the lenders get repaid, while the borrowers suffer — or their subjects do, most of whom did not benefit from loans that were often used on the military or on wasteful prestige projects, or simply disappeared because of corruption.

The phrase “debt service” is particularly revealing of the way the system works. What the poor countries of the world are caught up in because of unfair and dehumanizing trade policies is not the cost of paying back their foreign debts, but the cost of simply “servicing” them, by paying the usury without paying back any of the capital. The debt itself remains a continuing burden. The only way to break the cycle, in the capitalist arrangement of finances, is to

forgive the debt. But, still, if that is done the same trade practices and financial policies kick in again and the cycle of extreme poverty and extreme wealth begins anew.

Therefore, humanity has a real need and a cogent necessity to accept Allah (ﷻ) as the sole source of authority and the ultimate administrator of power. If human beings and human societies fall short of understanding this panacea the social laws of old will strike them again and again until they learn from their experiences, assimilate their scripture, and honor their prophets. Nothing short of this will do.

Man's subordination to Allah (ﷻ) means, in the final analysis, that a decent and peaceful human coexistence of races, classes, and genders can only be possible when they all yield to Allah's authority. Sometimes this will come about by the popular will; sometimes it may occur by "mass conversions"; sometimes there will be usurpers of power who will attack an Islamic social order and end up losing power, control, and dominion. The Muslims' subordination to Allah will eventually redeem humanity by liberating it from all false gods and all the false authorities imposed on man's state of nature, his state of being, and his state of affairs. This overhaul of human relations will purge all the massive channels of profiteering from the tyrannical tycoons as well as the pilfering presidents who have been riding roughshod over most of the human race. Will there be sacrifices? Of course. Will there be a prolonged struggle? Certainly. Is it worth all the forfeitures and apparent losses during this battle and conflict with totalitarianism and despotism? For sure — because the compensation shall be Allah's company, in this world and in the next.

In this context, Shu'ayb's leading words may be understood a little better, **"We would be dishonest to Allah if we were to return to your lifestyle (*modus vivendi*) after Allah has rescued us from it. And it behooves us not to return to it."** This is the character of Allah's subjects — the more they defy false authority the more they are humble to true authority; and the more they object to false gods, the more they concur with the only God. In a nutshell, Shu'ayb (ﷺ) expressed Allah's will to his people but they

chose to confront him with hostility. Both sides, belonging to two different worlds, reached a breaking point. So, they both parted company and eventually Shu‘ayb was saved from the impending “natural disaster” he saw coming.

**And he turned away from them, and said, “My people! For sure, I delivered to you my Sustainer’s message and gave you good advice: how, then, could I mourn for people who have denied the truth [about Allah’s authority and power]?” (7:93).**

The defining difference was belonging to or disclaiming Allah’s authority and power. This is mainstream history’s unwritten, untold, and unacknowledged history.

## Endnotes

- 1 There is a slight difference in counting some *āyāt* in some *sūrah’s* of the Qur’an. By universal consensus, the Qur’an is the sequence of *āyāt* from *al-Fātiḥah* to the *Mu‘awwidhatayn* (*Sūrah’s al-Falaq* and *al-Nās*). Also by universal consensus, the Qur’an is the sequence of *sūrah’s* from *al-Fātiḥah* to the *Mu‘awwidhatayn*. Some *sūrah’s*, though, have a couple or a few different counts of their *āyāt*. And that has to do with such matters as whether to count the beginning letters in certain *sūrah’s* as *āyāt* or not; or whether a punctuation should be a semicolon or a period. The alternative counting of *āyāt* does not add or subtract from the total words of a *sūrah*, or the particular sequence of those words.
- 2 Willam H. Gentz (editor), *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*. (Nashville, Tennessee, USA: The Abingdon Press, 1986), pp. 666–67.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid., pp. 341–42.
- 6–8 Ibid.

With the possible exception of Frances Bacon and Thomas Hobbes, John Locke (1632–1704) did more than all the other great philosophers to establish the empirical movement in British thought. He wrote a number of influential works, among which his masterpiece *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) expounds the metaphysical basis for his approach to problems of knowledge and truth.

*Empiricism* is the system of philosophy that accepts experience instead of logical reasoning per se as the source of knowledge (etymologically, the term *empiricism* comes from the Greek *en peira*, meaning *in trial* or *experiment*). The British Empiricists maintained that all knowledge or truth is derived from experience, rather than from theological techniques of the Continental Rationalists. Locke rejected the Cartesian concept of Innate Ideas and insisted that knowledge is derived only from experience. There is “nothing in the understanding which was not first in the senses.” Thus, at birth, the human mind is a blank, a “white paper,” or, as philosophers have termed it a *tabula rasa* (blank tablet).

Commencing with birth, as a person receives sensations, they register upon this *tabula rasa* mind, as if it were a light sensitive film exposed through the lens of a camera. The sensations are indelibly imprinted upon the mind. Without sensations, knowledge is impossible. As the mind perceives sensations, it relates or associates them and then reflects upon them, a process that Locke regarded as reasoning. Ideas, therefore, are the product of sensations. Personality is the complex accumulation of ideas, and personal identity is gained from the storing of ideas in the memory.

Locke drew a distinction between primary and secondary qualities in the objects of experience. Ideas are in the mind, but qualities are to be found in the physical object itself. The primary qualities of a physical object are constant, inseparable parts of the object itself, such as space, mass, and motion. Its secondary qualities are psychological, sensate, such as color, sound, and taste. Nevertheless, said Locke, both the primary and the secondary qualities are not really inherent within the real object itself, but are merely its characteristics. Consequently, the question is raised: what is the basic substance that produces these primary and secondary qualities? Is there a metaphysical substance (a thing in and of itself), or do qualities alone exist? For example, is a red rubber ball merely the qualities that comprise it, or does it have an underlying substance? Is the ball merely its sponginess, its redness, its roundness, its softness? Or is there more to it: does it have a metaphysical substance, a reality that produced the qualities? Locke pleads ignorance; he terms ultimate reality a *je ne sais quoi* (I know not what). Locke reasons,

...as I have said, not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom ourselves to suppose some substratum wherein they do subsist, and from which they do result; which

therefore we call substance... So that if any one will examine himself concerning his notion of pure substance in general, he will find he has no other idea of it at all, but only a supposition of he knows not what support of such qualities which are capable of producing simple ideas in us; which qualities are commonly called “accidents.” If any one should be asked... “What is it that solidity and extension inhere in?” he would not be in a much better case than the Indian before mentioned, who, saying that the world was supported by a great elephant, was asked, what the elephant rested on? To which his answer was, “A great tortoise”; but being again pressed to know what gave support to the broad-backed tortoise, replied — something, he knew not what.

And thus here, as in all other cases where we use words without having clear and distinct ideas, we talk like children; who, being questioned what such a thing is which they know not, readily give this satisfactory answer, that it is something; which in truth signifies no more, when so used, either by children or men, but that they know not what; and that the thing they pretend to know and talk of, is what they have no distinct idea of at all, and so are perfectly ignorant of it, and in the dark. The idea, then, we have, to which we give the general name substance, being nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substante*, “without something to support them,” we call that support substantia; which, according to the true import of the word, is, in plain English, standing under, or upholding.” (John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II (Chapter 23), 1690).

This kind of skeptical denial of substance is known as Metaphysical Agnosticism, the belief that ultimate reality is unknowable; Nihilism carries the matter a step further by denying altogether the existence of reality.

- 9 David Crystal (editor), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia, Second Edition*. (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 401–02.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 304.
- 11 Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey (editors), *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*. (New York, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 189–96
- 12–49 *Ibid.*
- 50 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 357–60.



51–64 Ibid.

65 Narrated by Ḥanzalah ibn al-Rabī'ah and recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

والذي نفسي بيده! لو تدمون على ما تكونون عندي . وفي الذكر . لصافحتكم الملائكة على فرشكم وفي طرقكم . ولكن [يا حنظلة!] ساعة وساعة [وكرر هذه الكلمة] ثلاث مرات .

66 Narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah and recorded by Muslim.

حَلِقَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ نَوْرِ وَحَلِيقِ الْجَانِّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ . وَحَلِيقِ أَدَمَ مَا وُصِفَ لَكُمْ .

67 A consensual hadith (*muttafaqun 'alayhi*) narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah, and recorded by many compilers of hadiths.

[قال النبي ﷺ] "يا عائش! هذا جبريل يقرأ عليك السلام." قالت "وعليه السلام ورحمة الله وهو يرى ما لا أرى."

68 Narrated by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

بينما نحن عند رسول الله ﷺ إذ طلع علينا رجل شديد بياض الثياب . شديد سواد الشعر . لا يرى عليه أثر السَّخَرِ . ولا يعرفه . حتى جلس إلى النبي ﷺ فأسند ركبتيه إلى ركبتيه . ووضع كفيه على فخذيه . وقال "يا محمد . أخبرني عن الإسلام؟" فقال رسول الله ﷺ "الإسلام أن تَشْهَدَ أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمداً رسول الله . وتُقيم الصلاة . وتؤتي الزكاة . وتصوم رمضان . وَحَجَّ البيت إن استطعت إليه سبيلاً" قال "صدقت." قال [عمر] "فَعَجِبْنَا له يَسْأَلُهُ وَيُصَدِّقُهُ." قال [الرجل] "فأخبرني عن الإيمان؟" قال [النبي ﷺ] "أن تُؤْمِنَ بالله . وملائكته . وكتبه . ورسوله . واليوم الآخر . وتؤمن بالقدر خيره وشره." قال [الرجل] "صدقت . فأخبرني عن الإحسان؟" قال [النبي ﷺ] "أن تُعْبُدَ الله كأنك تراه . فإن لم تكن تراه فإنه يراك." قال [الرجل] "فأخبرني عن الساعة؟" قال [النبي ﷺ] "ما المسؤول عنها بأعلم من السائل." قال [الرجل] "فأخبرني عن أماراتها؟" قال [النبي ﷺ] "أن تَلِدَ الأمة ربتها . وأن ترى الحفاة العراة العالة رعاء الشاء يتطاولون في البُنيان" قال [عمر] "ثم انطلق . فليئتُ ثلاثاً ثم قال [النبي ﷺ] 'يا عمر . هل تدري من السائل؟' قلتُ 'اللهُ ورسوله أعلم.' قال 'فإنه جبريل أتاكم يُعَلِّمُكم دينكم.'"

69 This hadith, with slightly varying words, has also been recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and Abū Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī. These variations can be found in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* in his explanation of *Sūrah al-Muddaththir*; and in al-Tirmidhī's *sunan*, in the chapter on *zuhd* (asceticism), where the following hadith is similarly recorded, "If you knew what I know you would rarely laugh and cry more often."<sup>a</sup>

أَطَّتِ السَّمَاءُ وَحَقَّ لَهَا أَنْ تَنْطَبَّ مَا فِيهَا مَوْضِعٌ شَبِيرٍ إِلَّا وَعَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ سَاجِدٌ أَوْ قَائِمٌ .

a Narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah and recorded by al-Bukhārī.

لو تَعْلَمُونَ ما أَعْلَمُ . لَضَحِكْتُمْ قَلِيلاً وَبَكَيْتُمْ كَثِيراً .

70 In reference to *āyah* 66:4, Allah (ﷻ) reproaches the Prophet (ﷺ) for trying to please his wives by denying himself what is *ḥalāl*.

71 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

حَدَّثَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ . وَهُوَ الصَّادِقُ الْمَصْدُوقُ . قَالَ "إِنْ أَحَدَكُمْ يُجْمَعُ فِي بطنِ أُمَّه أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا . ثُمَّ يَكُونُ عِلْقَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ . ثُمَّ يَكُونُ مُضْغَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ . ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَلَكًا فَيُؤَمِّرُ بِأَرْبَعِ كَلِمَاتٍ . وَيُقَالُ لَهُ 'اكتب عمله ووزقه وأجله وشقي أم سعيد'. ثُمَّ يُنْفَخُ فِيهِ الرُّوحُ . . ."

72 Some of these hadiths are to be found in the *sunans* of Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, and Abū Dāwūd.

73 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 590–94.

**ideology** – a term first coined in the West by the philosopher Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836) to refer to the study of ideas; now typically used to describe any set of beliefs that support sectional interests. The prevailing ideologies in society are likely to reflect and justify interests of the dominant (class, political, or religious) groups. The term implies that ideological beliefs are in some way exaggerations or distortions of reality. Several individual uses of the term have emerged in different political theories (for example, Marxism).

74 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 590–94.

75–80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

**zeitgeist** (German) – the spirit of the time; general characteristics of a particular period.

82 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 590–94.

83–91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid.

**Benelux countries** – Belgium, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands.

94 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 590–94.

**Charlemagne** or **Charles the Great** (742–814CE) – King of the Franks (771–814CE) and emperor of the West (800–814CE), the eldest son of Pepin

the Short. He defeated the Saxons (772–804CE), as well as the Lombards (773–774CE), fought the Muslims in al-Andalus, and took control of most of Christian West Europe. In 800CE he was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III. In his later years he consolidated his vast empire, building palaces and churches, and promoting Christianity, education, agriculture, the arts, manufacture, and commerce, so much so that the period has become known as the Carolingian Renaissance.



**Otto I** (912–973CE) – also known as **Otto the Great**; King of the Germans (from 936CE) and Holy Roman Emperor (from 962CE). He subdued many turbulent tribes, maintained almost supreme power in Italy, and encouraged Christian missions to Scandinavian and Slavonic lands.

**Napoleon Bonaparte** (1769–1821) – refer to **Endnote 241** in Volume 7 and **Endnote 402** in Volume 10.

**Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn** (1606–1669) – painter, born in Leyden, the Netherlands. He studied under various masters, and was introduced to Italian art. His early works include religious and historical scenes, unusual in Protestant Holland. After settling in Amsterdam (1631), he ran a large studio and took numerous pupils. *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632, located now in The Hague) assured his reputation as a portrait painter. In 1634, he married Saski van Ulenburgh (1613–1642), and in the year of her death, produced his masterpiece, *The Night Watch*, which was well received, and then followed by other important commissions. His extravagance, especially as collector, led to bankruptcy in 1656, but he continued to work with undiminished energy and power. His preserved works number over 650 oil paintings, 2,000 drawings and studies, and 300 etchings. He died in relative obscurity.



**Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770–1827) – German composer and pianist whose mastery of musical expression in every genre made him the dominant influence on 19th-century music. Born in Bonn, the son and grandson of musicians, he became deputy organist at the court of the Elector of Cologne at Bonn before he was 12; later he studied under Haydn and possibly Mozart, whose influence dominated his early work. From 1809, he received a small allowance from aristocratic patrons. Beethoven's repertoire includes



concert overtures; the opera *Fidelio*; five piano concertos and two for the violin (one unfinished); 32 piano sonatas, including the *Moonlight* and *Appassionata*; 17 string quartets; the *Mass in D (Missa solemnis)*; and nine symphonies, as well as many youthful works. He usually played his own piano pieces and conducted his orchestral works until he was hampered by deafness (1801); nevertheless he continued to compose. See also **Endnote 142** in Volume 9.

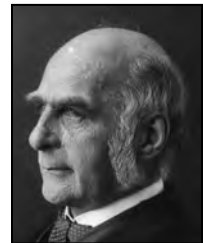
95 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 590–94.

96 *Ibid.*, pp. 707–11.

**Ham** – according to western biblical understanding, he was Prophet Noah’s second son (Genesis, 5:32). Along with his parents, wife, two brothers (Shem and Japheth), and their wives, Ham survived the Flood and partook in divine blessing (Genesis, 9:1–17). A prose text (biblical narrative with an identifiable narrator) reports that Ham saw his father’s nakedness during the latter’s drunken sleep (Genesis, 9:20–22). Yet on awakening, Noah pronounced a poetic curse against Canaan (Genesis, 9:25). Presumably an ancient poem attested Canaan, not Ham, as the subordinate brother of Shem and Japheth. By identifying Canaan as Ham’s son (Genesis, 9:18, 22), an editor harmonized the prose and poetic traditions.

**eugenics** – the “science” that dealt with the alleged effects on the individual of biological and social factors. The term was coined in 1883 by Francis Galton as “the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities.” Eugenics was destroyed in the earlier years of the 20th century by the propagation (for example, in Germany and the USA) of political doctrines, in the name of eugenics, which were non-scientific and brutal.

**Francis Galton** (1822–1911) – scientist and explorer, born in Birmingham, West Midlands. He studied at London and Cambridge universities, but left the study of medicine to travel in north and south Africa. He is best known for his studies of heredity and intelligence, such as *Hereditary Genius* (1869), which led to the field he called *eugenics*. Several of his ideas are referred to in the work of his cousin, Charles Darwin. He was knighted in 1909.



97 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 709–11.

98–108 *Ibid.*

109 Joel Krieger (editor-in-chief), *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 765–69.

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

**William Edward Burghardt Du Bois** (1868–1963) – historian, sociologist, and equal rights campaigner, born into a small black community in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. He studied at Fisk, Harvard, and Berlin universities, and in his writings explored the history and lives of African Americans. In politics he campaigned for full equality, opposing the tactics of Booker T. Washington. He helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and in his old age lived in Ghana, Africa.



113 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 765–69.

114–131 Ibid.

132 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 294–96.

**Johann Gottlieb Fichte** (1762–1814) – German philosopher who developed a comprehensive form of subjective idealism, expounded in *The Science of Knowledge* (1794). He was an admirer of Immanuel Kant. In 1792, Fichte published *Critique of Religious Revelation*, a critical study of Kant’s doctrine of the “thing-in-itself.” For Fichte, the absolute ego posits both the external world (the non-ego) and the finite self. Morality consists in the striving of this finite self to rejoin the absolute. In 1799, he was accused of atheism, and was forced to resign his post as professor of philosophy at Jena. He moved to Berlin, where he devoted himself to public affairs and delivered lectures, including *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (*Addresses to the German People*, 1807–1808), which influenced contemporary liberal nationalism. See also Endnote 382 in Volume 5.



**Thomas Carlyle** (1795–1881) – British historian and journalist whose work offers a powerful social and political commentary on his times. He was con-

cerned with the role of the “hero” in history and most of his writing depicts events through the lives of men and women. He also examined the drabness and bitterness occasioned by social structures. His works included *The French Revolution* (1837), *Frederick the Great* (1865), and *Chartism* (1839), all distinguished by a dramatic use of dialogue and imagery.



**Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel** (1770–1831) – refer to Endnote 93 in Volume 3, **Endnote 382** in Volume 5, **Endnote 284** in Volume 7, and Endnote 178 in Volume 11.

**Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844–1900) – philosopher; originally a professor of classical languages, he wrote his philosophical works over 20 years, before suffering a mental breakdown in 1889. He argued for a new, heroic mentality that would reject the “slave morality” of Christianity, part of the bourgeois Western civilization that he rejected with passion. A group of “supermen,” with a will to power, would lead the mass of inferior humanity. His doctrines were later used to justify Nazi racial and national ideology, but most scholars regard this as a perversion of Nietzsche’s own thought. See also **Endnote 44** in Volume 2, **Endnote 284** in Volume 7, and **Endnote 635** in Volume 11.



133 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 294–96.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid.

**Benito (Amilcare Andrea) Mussolini** (1883–1945) – refer to **Endnote 290** in Volume 7 and **Endnote 624** in Volume 12.

136 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 294–96.

137–139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

**Lateran Treaty** (1929) – agreement between the Italian fascist state and the papacy, ending a church-state conflict dating from 1870. Italy recognized the sovereignty of Vatican City, and Catholicism as the country’s only religion;

the papacy recognized the Italian state, and accepted the loss of other papal territories as irreversible. The treaty was confirmed in the Italian constitution of 1948.

**kulaks** – the most progressive and wealthy stratum of the late-19th-century and early-20th-century Russian peasantry. The kulaks developed after the emancipation of the serfs, and engaged in capitalist farming and entrepreneurial activities. During the collectivization of agriculture in the 1930s, Stalin liquidated the kulaks as a class – a process known as *de-kulakization*.

141 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 294–96.

142–145 Ibid.

146 **qirā'ah** – a method of reading the *āyāt* of the Qur'an, of which there are seven. Each method is defined by its own phonetic, grammatic, and punctuation peculiarities.

147 Some of the jargon particular to the fashion industry and related topics is given below:

- *accessory* – supplementary or additional item to basic clothing; also called *paraphernalia*.
- *apparel(s)* – clothing; embroidered ornamentation on ecclesiastical vestments.
- *attire* – clothes, especially fine or formal ones.
- *beau* – men of fashion, whose chief interest is in clothes and manners; also referred to as *dandy*, *fop*, or *coxcomb*.
- *bondage* – clothing of an aggressive style, characterized by black leather, studs, and chains.
- *canonicals* – a priest's official clothing; also called *vestments*.
- *civvies* – civilian clothes as opposed to military uniform.
- *coordinates* – clothes or accessories designed to be worn together.
- *couturier* – fashionable clothing for women; also called *modiste*.
- *dowdy* – shabby, untidy, or old-fashioned, as a woman or her clothes; also referred to as *frumpy*.
- *drapery* – cloth arranged in loose fold, or a representation of it in art.
- *duds* – clothing or personal belongings; also called *togs*.
- *ensemble* – matching set of clothes or outfit.
- *finery* – clothing of a very smart or expensive kind; also called *array*, *caparison*, *adornment*, or *regalia*.
- *frippery* – fancy, expensive clothing; also called *froufrou* and *fallal*.
- *garb* – clothing or dress, especially of a distinctive or special kind.
- *garment* – an item of clothing.

- *haberdashery* – shop of a dealer in men’s clothing.
- *habiliments* – archaic word for clothing.
- *habit* – clothing for a member of a religious order.
- *haute couture* – clothing of high fashion.
- *layette* – clothing and accessories for a newborn baby.
- *livery* – distinctive outfit or uniform of a group of servants, guild members, or the like.
- *raiment* – clothing with jewels or sequins.
- *sartorial* – tailored men’s clothing.
- *transvestite* – person who enjoys wearing clothes designed for the opposite sex; also called a *cross-dresser*.
- *unisex* – clothes, hairstyles, or the like suitable for people of either sex; also called *epicene*.
- *weeds* – mourning clothes.

148 Narrated by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

الحمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي رَزَقَنِي مِنَ الرِّيَاشِ مَا أَجَمَّلُ بِهِ فِي النَّايِسِ وَأُوَارِي بِهِ عَوْرَتِي.

149 Narrated by Umm al-Mu’minīn Ṣafiyah bint Ḥuyayy and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَجْرِي مِنْ ابْنِ آدَمَ مَجْرَى الدَّمِ.

150 Narrated by Ibn Mas‘ūd and recorded in the hadith collections of al-Tirmidhī, al-Nisā’ī, and Ibn Ḥabbān.

إِنَّ لِلْمَلِكِ لَهًّا وَلِلشَّيْطَانِ لَهًّا بِقَلْبِ ابْنِ آدَمَ . فَلَمَّهٗ الْمَلِكُ إِعَادَةَ الْخَيْرِ . وَتَصَدَّقَ بِالْوَعْدِ . وَلَهَّ الشَّيْطَانُ إِعَادَةَ الشَّرِّ وَتَكْذِيبَ بِالْوَعْدِ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدْكُمْ الْقَمْرَ وَيَأْمُرْكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ .

151 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 667–70.

152–164 Ibid.

165 Robert Stewart (consulting editor), *Ideas that Shaped Our World: Great Concepts of Then and Now*. (London, United Kingdom: Marshall Editions Developments Ltd., 1988), p. 61.

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid., pp. 80–81.

168–171 Ibid.



172 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and recorded by Muslim (note that this is not a hadith of the Prophet, but the verse of poetry alluded to in the text).

اليوم يبدو بعضه أو كله وما بدا منه فلا يحله.

173 **al-Muzdalifah** – a place roughly halfway between Miná and 'Arafāt where the pilgrims returning from 'Arafāt spend the night between the 9th and 10th of Dhū al-Hijjah.

174 Narrated by 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr and recorded by Muslim.

175 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir fi al-'Aqidah wa-al-Shari'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 8. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āshir, 1411AH), p. 182 (these are not the words of the Prophet directly, but those of a companion ordered to say them).

ألا يطوف بالبيت عريان.

176 Ibid.

177 Ibid.

178 Sharon S. McKern, *The Many Faces of Man*. (New York, New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., 1972), pp. 117–27.

179–184 Ibid.

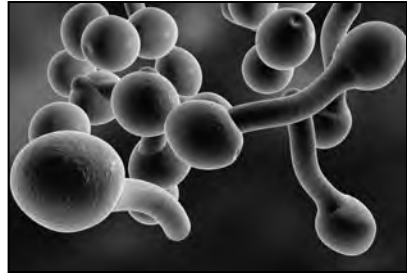
185 Dr. Ralph Golan, *Optimal Wellness*. (New York, New York: Ballantine Books, a division of Random House, Inc., 1995), pp. 91–92.

186 Ibid.

187 Ibid.

The individual on his way to better health may need to improve his digestive and assimilative processes before a whole-food diet can exert the maximum effect on an over-inflated appetite. He should concentrate on chewing food completely; avoiding excessive fluids or very cold or hot fluids with meals; and attending to food combinations. Applying other measures to improve digestion would be helpful: a bowel and liver-cleansing regime, even a series of fasts, to reverse the damage to the digestive system. Frequently, candidiasis and food allergies stimulate cravings and overeating, so treating these conditions can often normalize appetite.

**candidiasis** – a *Candida* (yeast) infection of the skin and mucous membranes of the body. Though *Candida albicans* is a common culprit, several *Candida* species produce disease. Typically candidiasis occurs in the colon, vagina, mouth (thrush), throat, lungs, or nails. However, a serious systemic (body-wide) infection may occur



when *Candida* invades the bloodstream. The symptoms of candidiasis syndrome attributable to intestinal infection can be extremely variable, ranging from headaches, confusion, and loss of energy, to chronic fatigue, cramps, bloating, rectal itching, and gas. It can be associated with lowered immunity. Because these symptoms fit many clinical conditions, it is imperative that diagnosis be confirmed by specific clinical lab tests based on specimen culture and analyses of *anti-Candida* antibodies in the bloodstream.

Several factors promote candidiasis: use of oral contraceptives and steroid hormones (which can suppress the immune system); long-term use of antibiotics (which kill bacteria that normally hold *Candida* in check); nutritional deficiencies (which weaken the immune system); chronic stress or viral (HIV) infection (which lowers immunity); low stomach acidity (which prevents sterilization of food and promotes mal-digestion); and high carbohydrate diet and diabetes (which increase sugar and support yeast growth).

In treating candidiasis, it is important to reduce the predisposing factors by: employing digestive aids; avoiding sugar and other refined carbohydrates; eliminating exposure to known allergens, which can weaken the immune system; bolstering the immune system with nutritional supplements; correcting low stomach acid production; and repopulating the intestines with beneficial bacteria (*lactobacillus* species and *bifidobacteria*) to reestablish normal microflora.

**food allergy** – an abnormal reaction of the immune system to normally harmless foods. An allergic response involves two aspects of the immune system: circulating antibodies and specialized attack cells. Each branch of the immune system can react to foods as though they were foreign invaders. In contrast, other types of food sensitivity such as lactose intolerance do not depend on antibody reactions, nor do they involve other aspects of the immune system.

Allergy patterns may change during a lifetime; old sensitivities may vanish, and new ones may appear according to the health of the immune system and to the amount of allergen exposure. Introducing solid foods before an infant's digestive tract is fully developed carries an increased risk of the development of food allergies. Children are more likely to suffer from

allergies than adults, though they often outgrow them. Individuals who have relatives with allergies are more prone to develop food allergies themselves. Food allergies are more likely to occur with inadequate nutrition, infections, and physical and emotional stress. Faulty digestion and intestinal inflammation can allow food allergens to penetrate intestinal barriers and enter the bloodstream.

Depending on how food allergy is defined, estimates of the prevalence of food allergies range from 2–25% of the US population, for example. Opinion is also divided regarding the predominant form of food allergies. Those who consider food allergies an uncommon phenomenon focus on the readily observable, rapid systemic reactions to foods. These generate hay fever-like symptoms (immediate hypersensitivity). Other research indicates that typical food allergies are complex immune reactions resulting in delayed hypersensitivity. They frequently involve antibodies in the blood (IgG type), and symptoms develop over hours or days after consuming the problematic food. This delay increases the difficulty in relating a specific food to sometimes vague symptoms.

The most common symptom of food allergy is fatigue. Other symptoms range from those typical of premenstrual syndrome to hypoglycemia, eczema, irritability, achy joints, puffy eyes with dark circles, or postnasal drip. Food allergies may produce asthma in the respiratory tract; in the brain, insomnia, mood changes, confusion or fatigue; in the gastrointestinal tract, indigestion, irritable colon, constipation, or diarrhea.

A simple, proven method of coping with food allergies is abstinence. To help identify troublesome foods, the affected individual is advised to keep a diet diary for a week or two, carefully recording everything eaten and any symptoms experienced. Avoiding the offending food for several days to several weeks may allow the immune system to return to normal. If symptoms recur when the questionable food is eaten again, that food is probably the culprit. Rotation diets have been devised to minimize exposure to allergenic foods. Because allergy-restricted diets can be difficult to balance nutritionally, those who have multiple food allergies may wish to consult both a physician and a nutritionist. Individuals with food allergies often need to find substitutes for common foods. A wide variety of food allergy cookbooks are now available to help plan delicious, nutritious meals.

188 Dr. Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*. (New York, New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1997), p. 144.

189 Ibid.

190 Ibid.

**anorexia nervosa** – psychological illness that mainly affects young women, characterized by significant weight loss (usually deliberately induced), an unrealistic fear of being overweight, and a loss of normal menstrual functioning. There is a distortion of body image, and sufferers are frequently hyperactive, have faddish eating habits, and some have depressed mood. The term was first used by the English physician William Gull (1816–1890) in 1874, but there are clear historical accounts of a similar condition dating back centuries, indicating that this is not a symptom of modern living. Current views hold that there are both biological and psychological causes, and that early treatment is likely to produce a better outcome than any delay, which may lead to chronicity of the illness and a fatal outcome in a proportion of sufferers.

191 Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, p. 144.

**bulimia nervosa** – a condition typified by repeated episodes of binge-eating and frequent vomiting and purging, associated with a preoccupation with control of body weight and a feeling of lack of control over eating behavior. The vast majority of patients are female, and patients report a high incidence of relatives who are obese and/or who have had a depressive illness. It is the reverse of anorexia nervosa, with which curiously it is occasionally associated in cycles. In rare cases it results from disturbance of the hypothalamus.

192 Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, p. 144.

193 Ibid.

194 Ibid., p. 29

195–198 Ibid.

199 Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, pp. 133–34.

200 Ibid.

201 Ibid.

202 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by al-Nisā’ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Mardawayh, and al-Bayhaqī.

كُلُّ مَا بَشِنْتَ وَالْبَسِ مَا شِنْتَ مَا أخطأْتُكَ انتنان: سَرَفٌ وَمَخِيلَةٌ.

203 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm (better known as Tafsīr al-Manār)*, Volume 8. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1414AH), p. 385.

204 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 110–15.

**Sigmund Freud** (1856–1939) – Refer to **Endnote 43** in Volume 2, **Endnote 19** in Volume 4, **Endnote 51** in Volume 6, **Endnote 344** in Volume 10, **Endnote 635** in Volume 11, and **Endnote 477** in Volume 12.

The dictionary meaning of the word *subconscious* refers to the part of the mind that one is not fully aware of but that influences one's actions and feelings; however in psychoanalysis, the word *unconscious* is preferred.

205 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 110–15.

**Carl Gustav Jung** (1875–1961) – psychiatrist, born in Kesswil, Switzerland. He studied medicine in Basel, and worked at the Burgholzli mental clinic in Zurich (1900–1909). He met Freud in Vienna in 1907, became his leading collaborator, and was president of the International Psychoanalytic Association (1911–1914). He became increasingly critical of Freud's approach, and *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido (The Psychology of the Unconscious, 1911–1912)* caused a break in 1913. He then developed his own theories, which he called “analytical psychology” to distinguish them from Freud's psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology. Jung's approach included a description of psychological types (extroversion/introversion); the exploration of the “collective unconscious”; and the concept of the psyche as a “self-regulating system” expressing itself in the process of “individuation.” He held chairs at Basel and Zurich.



**New Age** – movement of the late-1980s characterized by an emphasis on the holistic view of body and mind, alternative (or complementary) medicines, personal growth therapies, and a loose mix of theosophy, ecology, oriental mysticism, and a belief in the dawning of an astrological age of peace and harmony. Drawing on the hippie counterculture of the 1960s, new-age ideas include monism and pantheism, preferring intuition and direct experience to rationality and science. Critics of new-age thinking argue that it is so eclectic that it is incoherent. Nonetheless, new-age principles have inspired many business organizations to decentralize and produce less rigid management hierarchies. The rise of European Green parties provided the new-age philosophy with a practical and political forum for its ideas.

206 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 110–15.

207–211 Ibid.

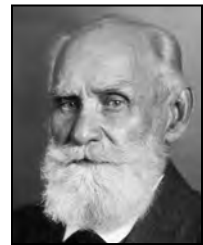
212 Ibid.

**Alfred Adler** (1870–1937) – pioneer psychiatrist, born in Vienna. He graduated as a doctor in 1895, and became a member of the psychoanalytical group that formed around Freud. His most widely referenced work is *Studie uber Minderwertigkeit von Organen* (*Study of Organ Inferiority and Its Psychological Compensation*, 1907), which aroused great controversy, and led to one of the early schisms in psychoanalysis. He died while on a lecture tour in Scotland.

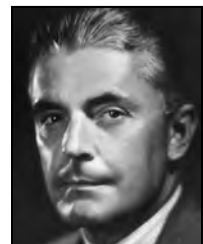


213 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 110–15.

**Ivan Petrovich Pavlov** (1849–1936) – physiologist, born near Ryazan, Russia. He studied at St. Petersburg, Breslau, and Leipzig, then returned to St. Petersburg, where he became professor (1891) and director of the Institute of Experimental Medicine (1913). He worked on the physiology of circulation and digestion, and from 1902 studied what later became known as Pavlovian or classical conditioning in animals, summarizing this work in *Lectures on Conditioned Reflexes* (1926). A major influence on the development of behaviorism in psychology, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1904.



**John Broadus Watson** (1878–1958) – psychologist, born in Greenville, South Carolina, USA. He studied at Chicago, and became professor of psychology at Johns Hopkins University (1908–1920), where he established an animal research laboratory, and became known for his behaviorist approach, which he later applied to human behavior. In 1921 he entered advertising, and wrote several general books on psychology.



214 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 110–15.

215 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 409.

216 Ibid.

217 Ibid., p. 297.

218 Michael Collins Piper, *The New Jerusalem: Zionist Power in America*. (Washington, DC: American Free Press, 2004), pp. 74–95.

219 Narrated by al-Miqdām ibn Ma'dīkarb and recorded by al-Tirmidhī.

ما ملأ ابن آدم وعاء شراً من بطنه . بحسب ابن آدم كُفيمات يُقْمَنَ صَلْبِهِ فَبِنْ كَانَ لَا مَحَالَةَ فَتُلْتُ لَطْعَامَهُ وَتُلْتُ لِنِغْرَابِهِ وَتُلْتُ لِنَفْسِهِ.

220 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar and recorded by Muslim.

الكَافِرُ يَأْكُلُ فِي سَبْعَةِ أَمْعَاءِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ يَأْكُلُ فِي مَعِيٍّ وَاحِدٍ.

221 Narrated by Sharīk ibn Ṭarīf and recorded by al-Haythamī and Muslim.

[قال النبي ﷺ] "لَنْ يَدْخُلَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ الْجَنَّةَ." قالوا "وَلَا أَنْتَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟" قال [النبي ﷺ] "وَلَا أَنَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَنِي اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ."

222 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar and Sa'd ibn 'Ubādaḥ and recorded by al-Bayhaqī and 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

قُلْتُ "يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّ الصَّدَقَةِ أَفْضَلُ؟" قال [النبي ﷺ] "سَقَى الْمَاءَ."

223 This is not a hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ), just an Arabic expression based on the knowledge gained from him.<sup>a</sup>

من كثرت ذنوبه فعليه بسقي الماء.

a Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, p. 225.

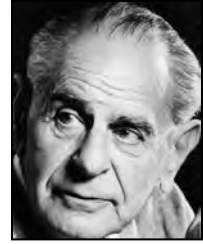
224 Recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.

225 Narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah and recorded by Ibn Mājah.

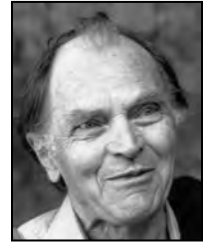
من سقى مسلماً شربةً من ماءٍ حيث يوجد الماء فكأنما أعتق رقبةً . ومن سقى مسلماً شربةً من ماءٍ حيث لا يوجد الماء فكأنما أحيأها.

226 Stephen P Elliott, Martha Goldstein, Michael Upshall (editors), *Webster's New World Encyclopedia, College Edition*. (New York, New York: Helicon Publishing and Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1993), p. 937.

**Karl Raimund Popper** (1902–1994) – Austrian philosopher of science. His theory of *falsificationism* says that although scientific generalizations cannot be conclusively verified, they can be conclusively falsified by a counterinstance; therefore, science is not certain knowledge but a series of “conjectures and refutations,” approaching, though never reaching, a definitive truth. For Popper, psychoanalysis and Marxism were unfalsifiable and therefore unscientific. His major work on the philosophy of science is *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1935); other works include *The Poverty of Historicism* (about the philosophy of social science, 1957), *Conjectures and Refutations* (1963), and *Objective Knowledge* (1972).



**Paul Karl Feyerabend** (1924–1994) – US philosopher of science, who rejected the attempt by certain philosophers (for instance, Popper) to find a methodology applicable to all scientific research. His works include *Against Method* (1975). Although his conclusions rely on historical evidence, Feyerabend argues that successive theories that apparently concern the same subject (for instance, the motion of the planets) cannot in principle be subjected to any comparison that would aim at finding the truer explanation. According to this notion of incommensurability, there is no neutral or objective standpoint and therefore no rational way in which one theory can be chosen over another. Instead, scientific progress is claimed to be the result of a range of sociological factors working to promote politically convenient notions of how nature operates.



227 Stephen P Elliott et al., *Webster's New World Encyclopedia*, p. 937.

228 Phillipa Sandall, Valerie Marlborough, Dr. Tom McKnight (editors), *Geographica: the Complete Illustrated Atlas of the World*. (New South Wales, Australia: Random House Australia Pty Ltd, 2005), pp. 6–7.

**Milky Way** – faint band of light crossing the night sky, consisting of stars in the plane of our galaxy; the name *Milky Way* is often used for the galaxy itself. It is a spiral galaxy, about 100,000 light-years in diameter, containing at least 100 billion stars. The Sun is in one of its spiral arms, about 25,000 light-years from the center. The densest parts of the Milky Way, toward the galaxy's center, lie in the constellation Sagittarius. In places, the Milky Way is interrupted by lanes of dark dust that obscure light from the stars beyond, such as the Coalsack Nebula in Crux (the Southern Cross). See also **Endnote 405** in Volume 5 and pp. 351–52, 362–63, 369–70 in Volume 11



(an image of the galaxy, as seen from Earth, is given below).



**Andromeda Galaxy** – a galaxy 2.2 million light-years away from Earth in the constellation Andromeda, and the most distant object visible to the naked eye (see image below). It is the largest member of the Local Group of galaxies. Like the Milky Way, it is a spiral orbited by several companion galaxies but contains about twice as many stars. It is about 200,000 light-years across. See also Endnote 19 in Volume 11.



**Local Group** – family of galaxies to which the Milky Way, Magellanic Clouds, and the Andromeda Galaxy belong. It sprawls over 1 megaparsec, and contains 3 large spiral galaxies, 12 irregular dwarfs, and 14 ellipticals — about  $5 \times 10^{12}$  solar masses in all. See also **Endnote 92** in Volume 2, Endnote 479 in Volume 8, and **Endnote 19** in Volume 11.

229 Phillipa Sandall et al., *Geographica*, pp. 6–7.

**Frederick William Herschel** (1738–1822) – astronomer, born in Hanover, Germany. He became skilled at building the largest reflecting telescopes made at the time, and these enabled him and his sister Caroline Herschel (1750–1848) to advance stellar astronomy rapidly, a tradition continued by his son, John Herschel (1792–1871). William discovered the planet Uranus in 1781, in the course of a systematic survey of the sky; found two satellites of Saturn; extensively observed double stars; and produced a notable star catalog. He was knighted in 1816, and his house in Bath has been restored as a museum.



**Harlow Shapley** (1885–1972) – US astronomer, whose study of globular clusters showed that they were arranged in a halo around the galaxy, and that the galaxy was much larger than previously thought. He realized that the Sun was not at the center of the Milky Way as then assumed, but two-thirds of the way out to the rim. Shapley joined the Mt. Wilson Observatory, in California in 1914.



**Sagittarius** – Latin for *archer*; a south constellation of the zodiac, lying between Scorpius and Capricornus, and containing numerous star clusters and nebulae. It lies in the direction of the center of the Milky Way, although the view is obscured by intervening clouds of dust a few kiloparsecs away. Radio and infrared radiation from the galactic center can penetrate this dust, providing information on conditions there.

230 Phillipa Sandall et al., *Geographica*, pp. 6–7.

231 Ibid.

232 Ibid.

**Big Bang** – beginning of the expansion of the universe from a high-density, high-temperature state. See also **Endnote 3** in Volume 6 and Endnote 16 in Volume 11.

233 Phillipa Sandall et al., *Geographica*, pp. 6–7.

**Edwin Powell Hubble** (1889–1953) – astronomer, born in Marshfield, Missouri, USA. He studied at Chicago and Oxford, and worked at the Mt. Wilson Observatory from 1919. He studied the velocities (redshifts) of galaxies, and was able to relate these to distances from the Milky Way, using a graph known as a Hubble diagram. This led to the discovery of the expanding universe, by attributing the redshifts to velocities of recession. The Hubble constant is a measure of the rate at which the expansion of the universe varies with distance: its value is 71 km/s per megaparsec. Hubble's law states that the recession velocity of a distant galaxy is directly proportional to its distance from the observer.



234 Phillipa Sandall et al., *Geographica*, pp. 6–7.

235 Ibid.

236 Ibid.

**Virgo** – Latin for *virgin*; constellation of the zodiac, which contains an abundance of faint galaxies as well as the first quasar to be recognized as such, 3C 273, and one of the largest galaxies known, M87. Its brightest star is Spica, a close binary, which is a distance of 86 parsecs from the Sun. Virgo lies on the celestial equator, between Leo and Libra. The Virgo constellation is not to be confused with the Virgo supercluster.

237 Phillipa Sandall et al., *Geographica*, pp. 6–7.

**Galileo Galilei** (1564–1642) – astronomer and mathematician, born in Pisa, Italy. He entered Pisa University as a medical student in 1581, and became professor of mathematics at Padua (1592–1610). In Padua he improved the refracting telescope (1610), and was the first to use it for astronomy. His realization that the ancient Aristotelian teachings about the structure of the universe were unacceptable brought severe ecclesiastical



censure, and he was forced to retract his findings before the Inquisition. By 1637 he had become totally blind. See also **Endnote 173** in Volume 2.

238 Phillipa Sandall et al., *Geographica*, pp. 6–7.

**Hubble Space Telescope** – an orbiting observatory — a joint project of the European Space Agency and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States — launched in 1990 with a 2.4 m (94 in) aperture telescope for visible and ultra-violet observation; named after Edwin Hubble. In the visible spectrum, it was expected to image objects more sharply than telescopes on Earth, and detect fainter sources. However, following the launch, a defect was discovered in the main optical system, which limited its performance. A space shuttle mission replaced the defective mirror and carried out other repairs to the telescope in 1993.



239 Narrated by Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

يا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! اربِعُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ . فَإِنَّكُمْ لَا تَدْعُونَ أَصَمَّ وَلَا غَائِبًا . إِنَّكُمْ تَدْعُونَ سَمِيعًا قَرِيبًا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ .

240 Narrated by Anas ibn Mālik and recorded by Abū al-Shaykh ibn Ḥabbān in his *sunan* in the book of *thawāb* (reward).

دَعْوَةٌ فِي السَّرِّ تَعْدِلُ سَبْعِينَ دَعْوَةً فِي الْعَلَانِيَةِ .

241 Narrated by Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Abū Dāwūd.

[قال النبي ﷺ] "إِنَّهُ سَيَكُونُ قَوْمٌ يَعْتَدُونَ فِي الدُّعَاءِ." وَقَرَأَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ "ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُتَعَدِّينَ." [فقال النبي ﷺ] "وإِنَّ حَسْبُكَ أَنْ تَقُولَ 'اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ.'" "

242 Narrated by Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh and recorded by Abū Dāwūd and Muslim.

لَا يَمُوتُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يَحْسِنُ الظَّنَّ بِأَلَّهِ .

243 Some learned persons did not concur with raising the hands during a *du‘ā’*, among them ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Rabāḥ, Ṭāwūs ibn Kaysān, Mujāhid ibn Jabr,

Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im, and Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab, who said that the Prophet only raised his hands in *du'ā'* during the prayer for rain (*Ṣalāh al-Istisqā'*).

244 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar and recorded by al-Bukhārī.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَبْرَأُ إِلَيْكَ بِمَا صَنَعَ خَالِدٌ.

245 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr, Volume 8*, p. 242 (originally found recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*).

246 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr, Volume 8*, p. 242 (originally recorded by al-Tirmidhī).

247 Stephen P Elliott et al., *Webster's New World Encyclopedia*, pp. 716, 1052, 1123, 1132.

248–251 Ibid.

252 Stephen P Elliott et al., *Webster's New World Encyclopedia*, p. 878.

253 Ibid.

254 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 40.

255 Stephen P Elliott et al., *Webster's New World Encyclopedia*, p. 459.

256 Ibid.

257 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 369.

258 Ibid., p. 530.

259 Ibid., p. 312.

**Jacob Christopher Burckhardt** (1818–1897) – historian, born in Basel, Switzerland. He studied theology and later art history in Berlin and Bonn, became editor of the *Basler Zeitung* (1844–1845), and was professor of history at Basel University (1858–1893). He is known for his works on the Italian Renaissance and on Greek Civilization.

260 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, pp. 197, 1027.

261 **Gilgamesh Epic** – like Homer’s *Odyssey*, one of the principal heroic stories of ancient times, dating to at least 2000BCE. It exists in a number of ancient editions including Babylonian, Sumerian, and Assyrian. Gilgamesh, according to the Sumerian king chronology, was the fifth king of the First Dynasty, which reigned in Uruk after the Flood. The epic tells the story of Gilgamesh’s dangerous journey seeking the immortality of the gods. It was found written on 12 clay tablets, in the middle of the last century by archaeologists working in the ruins of 7th-century-BCE Nineveh. Other portions of it were found in Boghazkoi, Nippur, Kish, Asshur, Sippar, and Ūr. The 12th tablet contained the Babylonian account of the Flood and is remarkably parallel to the later Hebrew account recorded in the Book of Genesis (chapters 6–9). The hero is Utnapishtim, corresponding to the biblical Noah. The ark is called both a boat and a great house, built as an exact cube about 200 ft in dimension. It had seven stories and was divided into nine sections, having a total of 63 compartments. It had a door and at least one window. Utnapishtim put on board “the seed of all living creatures,” but it appears from the account that these only included herbivorous animals. The Flood lasted seven days, and then a dove, a swallow, and a raven were successively sent out to look for dry land. Utnapishtim, like Noah, was finally blessed by the gods after he offered a sacrifice.

262 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, p. 250.

263–267 Ibid.

268 Ibid., p. 251

269 Some Islamic sources say they were six, other sources say they were 40 men and women.<sup>a</sup>

a Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, p. 251.

270 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, p. 252.

271 **Ād** – name of a people frequently mentioned in the Qur’an to whom Prophet Hūd (ﷺ) was sent by Allah (ﷻ) and whose disobedience to Allah’s law brought about their extinction. Their arrogance, materialism, and mocking attitude toward their prophet were comparable to that of Muhammad’s (ﷺ) own tribe, Quraysh. See also **Endnote 55** in Volume 11.

272 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās who told it to ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Rabāh, and then recorded by Ishāq ibn Bishr and Ibn ‘Asākir.

273 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Volume 8, p. 495.

274 A.B.C. Whipple, *Planet Earth: Storm*. (Chicago, Illinois, USA: Time-Life Books, Inc., 1982), p. 6.

275 Ibid.

276 Ibid.

277 Hurricanes were originally given female names, but that changed in 1978 when male names were introduced for the first time. Hurricanes are also known as typhoons in the western north Pacific Ocean and cyclones in the Bay of Bengal.

278 **Thamūd** – a people mentioned in ancient records, and of course in the Qur'an, according to which they received a divine revelation through Prophet Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ). His message was symbolized by a she-camel the people killed; for the rejection of the revelation they were destroyed by an earthquake and a thunderbolt. Archaeological sources generally identify them as the Nabateans, whose capital was Petra (in today's Jordan), and who had a colony in Arabia. The ruins of this Nabatean city, northeast of Madinah near al-'Ulā, are called Madā'in Ṣāliḥ, or the "cities of Ṣāliḥ," by the Arabs, and the civilization has for this reason been called "Thamudic."

279 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, p. 273 (cited from *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*).

280 Ibid. (originally narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās).

281 Ibid., p. 276.

In the Islamic week, Yawm al-Arbi'ā' is the fourth day of the week (corresponding to Wednesday in the Gregorian calendar) and Yawm al-Sabt is Sabbath day (corresponding to Saturday).

282 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, p. 272 (cited from *Tafsīr al-Alūsi*).

283 Narrated by Abū Ṭalḥah al-Anṣārī and recorded by al-Bukhārī.

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا أَنْتُمْ بِأَسْمَعُ إِلَّا أَقْوَلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَجِيبُونَ.

284 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, p. 281.

285 Stephen P Elliott et al., *Webster's New World Encyclopedia*, p. 386.

**zygote** – an ovum (egg) after fertilization but before it undergoes cleavage to begin embryonic development.

**hermaphrodite** – organism that has both male and female sex organs. Hermaphroditism is the norm in species such as earthworms and snails, and is common in flowering plants. Cross-fertilization is the rule among hermaphrodites, with the parents functioning as male and female simultaneously, or as one or the other sex at different stages in their development.

286 Stephen P Elliott et al., *Webster's New World Encyclopedia*, p. 386.

287 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 333–35.

288–299 Ibid.

300 Dr. David Duke, *Jewish Supremacists, Homosexuality and Divide and Conquer*. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA: davidduke.com website, June 2, 2017).  
<https://davidduke.com/jewish-supremacists-homosexuality-and-divide-and-conquer/>

301 Carol Dunn, *History in the Making*, V3 N1, “The Jewish Connection to Homosexuality in the Third Reich.” (Sydney, Australia: journal.historyitm.org website, Summer–Autumn 2014).  
<https://journal.historyitm.org/volume-three-issue-one/>

302 Patrick J. Buchanan, *The Death of the West*. (New York, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), pp. 28–31.

303–310 Ibid.

311 Ibid., pp. 243–44.

312 Ibid.

313 Ibid.

314 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 267–70.

315–320 Ibid.



321 Ibid.

**Colossians** – a letter of St. Paul to the church at Colossae, a great and ancient Phrygian city in southwest Asia Minor, in the valley of the Lycus River near its joining with Meander.

322 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 267–70.

323–329 Ibid.



## Glossary

**‘Ād** – great and ancient people frequently mentioned in the Qur’an, “...who built monuments upon high places” (26:128). They were the recipients of a divine message through the agency of the Prophet Hūd (ﷺ), upon the rejection of which, they were destroyed by God (7:63 and 26:123–135). Their city, perhaps their tribe, was also called “Iram of the pillars” (or perhaps “tent-poles”). Whether ‘Ād and “Iram of the pillars” are one and the same depends upon one’s interpretation of the relevant Qur’anic *āyāt* (89:6–7); the identification cannot be definitively established as of yet. Islamic historians generally place ‘Ād in the south of Arabia but some commentators on the Qur’an say, doubtless in a symbolical sense, that the ancient Israelis had to fight remnants of the tribe of ‘Ād when they entered the Holy Land. ‘Ād is considered to be one of the tribes of the original Arabians.

**ākhirah** – *the end-life or afterlife*; this expression refers to the hereafter, or afterlife, or life after death. In a more refined sense, this word alludes to the time-period that will follow the Day of Resurrection and Judgement.

**‘alaqaḥ** – adhesive clot.

**alif** – the first letter of the Arabic alphabet.

**āmīn** – we consent to, approve of, and are committed to what was said.

**al-a‘rāf** – customs, conventions, habits; the Qur’anic usage of the word refers, according to some Islamic scholars, to the barrier between Paradise and Hellfire, while others say it alludes to those who are endowed with the faculty of discernment between right and wrong, and thus can easily recognize who has done right and who has done wrong.

**‘aṣabīyaḥ** – any social expression of clan solidarity or exclusivity — ethnic, racial, national, sectarian — that presents itself with an air of supremacy or elitism, such that individual members are supported by the rest even if their actions are unjust, criminal, and oppressive.

**Aṣḥāb al-Aykaḥ** – the People of the Timberland; one of the historical social orders to whom Prophet Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) was sent.

**‘awraḥ** – private part, genitalia; plural is ‘awrāt.

**āyaḥ** – illustration, miracle; this could refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) illustration through revelation, that is, the verse(s) of the generous Qur’an; it can also refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) illustration of power and authority in the course of prophetic and social history (that is, an alteration of physical laws: miracles); and lastly, it could refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) illustration of power as an act of creation. Plural for āyaḥ is āyāt.

**Banū Isrā’īl** – the Children of Israel.

**dā’ī** – a caller to Islam; an Islamic “missionary.”

**da'wah** – *call*; contemporarily used, though not necessarily right, to mean missionary activity designed to convince non-Muslims of Allah's (ﷻ) message.

**Dhū al-Ḥijjah** – *the twelfth month of the Islamic hijrī calendar*; it is also one of the four months in which *al-ladhīna āmanū* are not to initiate any fighting or hostilities.

**dīn** – *ideological pattern and social prototype*; this word is probably one of the most mistranslated words. The usual translation of the word is *religion*. But in a better understanding of Islamic terms the word *dīn* should carry within its meaning a lively prototype and a social system. As such a *dīn* could be man-made and in denial of Allah (ﷻ) or it may be in conformity with Allah (ﷻ) and in affirmation of Him.

**du'ā'** – *prayer or a reverent petition to Allah (ﷻ)*.

**dunyā** – *world*.

**fāḥishah** – *misconduct, immoral behavior, moral violation*. Its plural is *fawāḥish*. An emphatic or exaggerated form of *fāḥishah* is *faḥshā'*.

**faḥshā'** – *vulgarity*; see the definition for *fāḥishah* above.

**faqīh** – *savant, academician*; one who specializes, in particular, in matters that are jurisprudential.

**fawāḥish** – plural of *fāḥishah*.

**fitnah** – *trial and temptation, affliction*; *mainstream public opinion contradicting the truth and justice*; *seduction, sedition*.

**ghawl** – *a silent killer (from the jinn)*.

**ghaybī** – *pertaining to the unseen, unknown, metaphysical, and incomprehensible.*

**hadith** – a verbal or practical precedent of the Prophet (ﷺ); the simple linguistic meaning of the word is *speech*.

**al-Hadith** – the full body of hadith literature of the Prophet (ﷺ).

**Hajj** – *the Pilgrimage*; this is the annual meeting of the Muslims in Makkah during the last three months of the lunar year: Shawwāl, Dhū al-Qa‘daḥ, and Dhū al-Ḥijjah. The mass assembly of people during this annual congregation is Yawm ‘Arafāt, which is the 9th day of Dhū al-Ḥijjah — the day before ‘Īd al-Aḍḥá.

**ḥalāl** – *sanctioned, ritually fit*; this word roughly corresponds to the word *kosher* in some of its biblical usage. The word extends over ritual and legal practices.

**ḥarām** – *taboo, unauthorized or unlawful*; the opposite of *ḥalāl*.

**al-Ḥijāz** – historical province of the Arabian Peninsula on the western shore of the Red Sea, the territory in which the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah are located.

**Hijrah, the** – *the forced departure of Muhammad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah*; in a sense it was the Prophet (ﷺ) securing asylum from the Makkan *mushriks* and also his assumption of the role of leader, statesman, and ultimate decision maker — or imam — of the newly established Islamic State in Madinah.

**hijrī** – *referring to the Hijrah, or more generally to the Islamic calendar and the dates organized according to its lunar pattern of timekeeping.*

**ḥilf** – *alliance; pact, treaty.*

**al-Ḥums** – pre-Islamic religious extremists peculiarly from Quraysh but also inclusive of Kinānaḥ, al-Aws, al-Khazraj, Thaḳīf, Ghaṭafān, and others. They would not give their daughters in marriage to anyone except that he accepts their religious convictions. They were particularly fanatical about the four sacred months of the year (*al-ashhur al-ḥurum*). During their performance of the Hajj, they would abstain from eating fat, and they would not consume any plants in the vicinity of the Ḥaram.

**‘ibādah** – *man’s proper position with his Maker and Creator: compliance, obedience, and conformity*; this is another one of those words badly bruised through translation. Translators render its meanings as *worship*. False. It is much more than a devotional or ritual gesture or habit. It is the notions and actions of man according to Allah’s (ﷻ) values and principles.

**‘ibādullāh** – *conforming subjects of Allah (ﷻ)*; singular: ‘abdullāh.

**Iblīs** – *Lucifer*; this word is generally used as a name of Satan before he broke with God and became the evil being that would bedevil Adam, Eve (ﷺ), and their descendants.

**Iblīsī** – *having to do with or pertaining to Satan*.

**‘ifrīt** – *one who is hyperactive (referring to the jinn)*.

**ifsād** – *thwarting, undermining, sabotaging; degrading, corrupting, perverting* (the particular usage is defined by context).

**iḥsān** – *perfection*; this is an Islamic word-cum-concept. The idea is to put in the extra effort for completion and culmination of any God-driven and God-ordained task. The epitome and paradigm of this human action-to-perfection is for each person to always be mindful that even if he does not see Allah (ﷻ), he is always seen by Him. Nothing escapes *His* attention. Therefore, everything

someone does has to be done to meet the “higher standards of Allah (ﷻ)” knowing that *He* is watching.

**ijtihād** – a legal Islamic assessment or edict; this word infers a rigorous scholarly effort to reach an informed opinion based upon the Qur’an and the Sunnah.

**imam** – leader; the word has both positive and negative usages in the Qur’anic text.

**īmān** – secure commitment, covenant; the word is virtually a distillation of *amānah* (trust) and *amn* (security).

**iqra’** – Read! The word that commenced the revelation of the Qur’an to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ); it is the first word of the 96th chapter, *Sūrah al-‘Alaq*.

**Islam** – resignation/yielding; this is a relationship with Allah (ﷻ) more than it is a religion. And it defines individuals and people who acquiesce and adhere to the will of Allah (ﷻ). Like other Qur’anic words, its specific meaning is refined within the context it is found in. Generally speaking, it may be understood to refer to the “civic character” or “civilian status” of people once there is a full and meaningful *taqwā*-type orderliness with associated rules.

**isrāf** – extravagance, excess, wastefulness; luxury, indulgence.

**isrā’iliyāt** – Jewish traditions falsely (or opportunistically) attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) that have found their way into compendiums of Islamic hadith literature.

**ithm** – an intentional human act that delays or retards Allah’s (ﷻ) approval and payoff; technically it is not equivalent to the English word *sin*.



**Jabal al-Jūdīy** – Mt. *Jūdīy*; the place where Prophet Nūḥ’s ark came to a rest as the Flood began to recede.

**jāhili** – *pertaining to jāhiliyāḥ (ignocracy); ignocratic.*

**jāhiliyāḥ** – *an era of governance without God, the age of systemic lack of scriptural guidance; it may be characterized as an “ignocracy” or “idiocracy.”* It not only refers to the time preceding Muhammad (ﷺ), but also any time period in which Allah’s (ﷻ) *dīn* is overrun by other systems and establishments.

**jamal** – *camel; twisted rope.*

**jihad** – *the ultimate effort and sacrifice; it is not holy war.* The word has a spectrum of meanings and applications that range from a struggle against the forces of evil within the self to a struggle against the forces of evil within the cosmos.

**jinn** – *unseen, intelligent beings; this is an independent species of intelligent and advanced life that will be held accountable, like humans, on the Day of Judgement.* Their composition is from the substance of the fire, whereas man’s composition is from the substance of clay.

**Ka’bah** – *a cubic structure, an object of veneration; the black enshrouded cube at the center of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, originally built by Ibrāhīm and Ismā’īl (ﷺ) and around which Muslim pilgrims perform their ṭawāf (circumambulation).*

**kāfir** – *one who actively resists and refuses to comply with Allah (ﷻ); every person who enlists in kufr becomes a kāfir.* Plurals are *kāfirūn*, *kāfirīn*, and *kuffār*; refer to the general definition of *kufr* below.

**khalīfah** – *successor; this word has its Qur’anic context.* In this context man/humans are designated as Allah’s (ﷻ) successors on earth.

In post-prophetic Islamic literature it refers to those who succeeded the Prophet (ﷺ) as the leader of the Muslims.

**khaṭīb al-anbiyā'** – *the prophets' orator*; a tribute given to Prophet Shu'ayb (ؑ) by the *mufassir*, Ibn Kathīr.

**khilāfah** – *successorship; Caliphate*.

**kufr** – *denial of Allah's (ﷻ) authority and power*; this becomes a “philosophy” or an “ideology.” There is a mental construct of ideas that argue against Allah (ﷻ) as Sovereign, Lawgiver, and Authority. There may be many expressions of this antithetical hypothesis and political orientation; but one thing in common among all of them — bar none — is their exclusion of Allah (ﷻ) as the Almighty and the ultimate Authority.

**kutlaḥ** – *bloc, league*.

**lām** – *the 23rd letter of the Arabic alphabet (corresponds to the English letter “L”).*

**Madā'in Ṣāliḥ** – *the cities of Ṣāliḥ*; refers to the ruins of Thamūd in an area northeast of Madinah, near today's al-'Ulā. Some archaeologists suggest that Thamūd and the ancient Nabateans are one and the same people.

**Madinan** – *having to do with Madinah*; usually refers to Qur'anic verses (*āyāt*) revealed in Madinah.

**Makkan** – *having to do with Makkah*; often refers to Qur'anic verses (*āyāt*) revealed in Makkah.

**malakayn** – *two angels*.

**malikayn** – *two kings*.

**marḥūmūn** – those who receive Allah’s (ﷻ) mercy; plural of *marḥūm*.

**masjid** – the place or area of *sujūd* (prostration); a mosque.

**mīm** – the 24th letter of the Arabic alphabet (corresponds to the English letter “M”).

**Miná** – a neighborhood of Makkah covering an area of approximately 20 km<sup>2</sup>, slightly southwest of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. In pre-Islamic Arabia, this was the place that pilgrims would take off their clothes before proceeding to circumambulate the Ka‘bah naked. Today, during Hajj season, it provides temporary accommodation for up to three million visiting pilgrims; it is also the place where the three *jamarāt* (the pillars with the piles of pebbles at their bases) are located for the ritual stoning of Satan.

**mudghaḥ** – fetus in the womb, just before the formation of its bones.

**mufasssir** – exegetist; one who explains the meanings of the Qur’an.

**muḥajjabāt** – commonly refers to women wearing the Islamic dress code (*ḥijāb*).

**mushrik** – an individual(s) and people(s) who actively and institutionally diminish the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and promote the authority of others. They equate worldly powers with Allah (ﷻ) and they denigrate Allah (ﷻ) as “one among many” deities and authorities. The feminine singular is *mushrikah*; feminine plural is *mushrikāt*.

**Muslim** – a man or woman who has acquiesced to the command and counsel of Allah (ﷻ), and the leadership of the final prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ); plural is *muslimūn*.

**muttafaqun ‘alayhi** – an agreed upon matter; in most hadith literature, this refers to a hadith found in both *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim on the authority of the same companion even if there exists variation in the wording between the two compendiums.

**muttaqī** – one who is actively conscious of Allah’s (ﷻ) power presence and hence is always on the alert and on the defensive pertaining to Allah (ﷻ); this word should never be translated as *pious* or *fearful*, as it is known nowadays.

**al-Muzdalifah** – a place roughly halfway between Miná and ‘Arafāt where the Hajj pilgrims returning from ‘Arafāt spend the night between the 9th and 10th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah.

**naḥkhaḥ** – *puff, breath; inflation, swelling*. It is Allah’s *naḥkhaḥ* that causes the soil and earth component of man’s body to come to life, “...whereupon We breathed of Our spirit into it...” (66:12).

**nafs** – *the bio-self*.

**Nasr** – *vulture*; appears to be a pre-Islamic idol, mentioned in the Qur’an (71:23) as a deity of the people at the time of Prophet Nūḥ (ﷺ). According to ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, the idols of Nūḥ’s people were worshipped by the pre-Islamic Arabians at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) — Nasr by Ḥimyar. Fakhar al-Dīn al-Rāzī says that Nasr was worshipped in the form of an eagle.

**nifāq** – *disloyalty, hypocrisy, feigning allegiance*.

**nikāḥ** – *ceremonial and contractual marriage; matrimony, wedlock*.

**nuṭūfaḥ** – *embryo*.

**Qābil and Hābil** – the first two sons of Adam and Eve (ﷺ); they correspond to the biblical Cain and Abel.

**qadar** – *power, proportion, will; capacity, destiny*. It could have the opposite meaning depending on context, hence it could mean the in-

dependent will to act, as with the *qadar* of Allah (ﷻ), or the way man's destiny is shaped by the interplay between his will and the divine will, "But you cannot will it unless Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds, wills [to show you that way]" (81:29).

**qiblah** – the accommodating and unifying center that attracts the Muslims in their time of *ṣalāh* and devotional services. The Muslims' *qiblah* is Makkah.

**qirā'ah** – a particular and authorized cognitive process of pronouncing, reciting, and articulating the wording of the *Qur'an*; there are seven such *qirā'ahs*.

**qist** – social justice administered through the employment of institutional mechanisms such as courts, regulations, and legislative action.

**Quraysh** – literally, little shark; refer to **Endnote 250** in this volume and **Endnote 257** in Volume 7 for a brief history of the dominant power constituent of Makkah.

**Qurayshī** – having to do with the *Quraysh*.

**rabb al-'alamīn** – Sustainer or Lord of all the worlds; the expression is used to refer to Allah (ﷻ).

**rajfah** – tremor, earthquake.

**Ramaḍān** – the ninth month of the Islamic *hijrī* calendar; the month of fasting for committed Muslims, and the auspicious month in which the *Qur'anic* revelation to Muhammad (ﷺ) began.

**Rasūl-Allah** (ﷺ) – the Messenger of Allah (ﷻ); also called Allah's Apostle (ﷺ), Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) or simply the Prophet (ﷺ). When this is used in Islamic literature, the majority of times it is in reference to the final messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ).

**risālah** – *written communication, letter, or message; scriptural substance delivered to humanity/community by a prophet from Allah (ﷺ).*

**rūh** – *vital essence, soulfulness.*

**Rūh al-Qudus** – *the archangel Gabriel (ﷺ).*

**šād** – *the 14th letter of the Arabic alphabet.*

**šahīh** – *sound, authentic, credible; in hadith literature, this refers to (unquestionably) valid hadiths.*

**Šahīh(s) of various scholars** – *the compilation of hadiths collected by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, al-Nisā’ī, al-Tirmidhī, and others.*

**šalāh** – *expressing a concentrated and devotional relationship with Allah (ﷻ); Muslims should do this (at least) five times a day: Fajr, Zuhr, ‘Aṣr, Maghrib, and ‘Ishā’.*

**Šalāh al-Istisqā’** – *prayer appealing for rain.*

**šālihūn** – *those who sincerely do good works for the cause of Allah (ﷻ), expecting no earthly gratification or reward; plural of šālih.*

**Shafi’ī** – *one of the four institutional Sunnī Islamic schools of thought (madhhabs), based on the teachings and rulings of Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāf’ī (150–204AH). Shāfī’ī scholars are considerably more circumspect about hadith literature than their Ḥanbalī counterparts. The madhhab is prevalent in the Arab Muslim East, and in Indonesia and Malaysia.*

**shahīd** – *martyr. The plural is shuhadā’.*

**shar’ī** – *of or pertaining to the Shari’ah. When this refers to the definition of certain words, it alludes to a specific meaning derived from*

the Shari'ah; for instance, the word *ṣalāh* literally means *blessing*, but its *shar'ī* meaning refers to the physical and mental communion with Allah (ﷻ) that Muslims are required to perform five times a day.

**shirk** – the act and implementation of equating or associating others with Allah (ﷻ) as divine and as authority; in other words the displacement of allegiance in man's heart and the dislocation of authority in man's life. See also *mushrik* above.

**shuhadā'** – plural of *shahid*.

**ṣiddiqūn** – those who remain true to their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) despite obvious challenges to the contrary; plural of *ṣiddiq*.

**ṣirāṭ mustaqīm** – straight span; this is in reference to man's meaningful and directional journey to Allah (ﷻ) during his lifelong efforts and movements. It is a phrase used in every *ṣalāh* to focus a Muslim's attention on the fact that he/she is pursuing a path that "leads to God."

**sittati ayyām** – six days, eons, time periods; or six phases, stages.

**sunan** – social laws. This is the word's Qur'anic meaning in so far as such laws are the pattern of history, human activities, and nature. *Sunan* also refers to a compilation of hadith collected and organized by a *muḥaddith*, one who searches hadith literature with a view to organizing and verifying hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ). It is the plural of *sunnah*.

**sunnah** – social law; its plural is *sunan*.

**Sunnah, the** – the lifestyle pattern of the Prophet (ﷺ); or the final set of social laws imparted by Allah (ﷻ) to humanity through the agency of Muhammad (ﷺ).

**sūrah** – ensemble of a body of themes in the Qur’an; there are 114 sūrahs in the glorious Qur’an.

**Suwā‘** – pre-Islamic idol, mentioned in the Qur’an (71:23) as a deity of the people at the time of Prophet Nūḥ (ﷺ). ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās narrates that at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), the pre-Islamic Arabians of Hudhayl worshipped Suwā‘ in the form of a woman.

**tabligh** – communication; most of the time, this word is specifically used to describe the mode of communication between the Prophets (ﷺ) and their peoples and societies. The Prophets (ﷺ) communicated scripture to the masses of people around them.

**tafsīr** – exegesis; simple interpretation or critical interpretation of the meanings of the Qur’an.

**ṭāghūt** – concentration and abuse of excessive power; this word is usually used to describe governments and regimes that, having accumulated wealth and resources, find themselves in a “superpower” or “hyper-power” position in the world. The exercise of this kind of centralized power makes these governments rivals (in their own consciousness) to the power and authority of Allah (ﷻ). This aggregation and engrossment of power becomes satanic.

**ṭāghūti** – adjective referring to ṭāghūt.

**tāhir** – state of bio-purity.

**taqwá** – the feeling and thinking of Allah’s (ﷻ) immediate power presence in the affairs of man that makes a person avoid Allah’s (ﷻ) corrective interference in man’s individual and social life.

**tawāf** – circumambulation (of the Ka‘bah).

**tawhīd** – monotheism, singular divine authority; this combines in its connotational and denotational meanings all the consolidated and



indivisible traits and understandings of Allah (ﷻ). In *His* self, *He* is one; in *His* attributes, *He* is one; therefore, in any way the human mind tries to understand *Him*, *He* remains exalted — as *He* distinguishes *Himself* in *His* own words.

**Thamūd** – a people mentioned in ancient records, and of course in the Qur’an, according to which they received a divine revelation through Prophet Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ). His message was symbolized by a she-camel the people killed; for the rejection of the revelation they were destroyed by an earthquake and a thunderbolt. Archaeological sources generally identify them as the Nabateans, whose capital was Petra (in today’s Jordan), and who had a colony in Arabia. The ruins of this Nabatean city, northeast of Madinah near al-‘Ulā, are called Madā’in Ṣāliḥ, or the “cities of Ṣāliḥ,” by the Arabs, and the civilization has for this reason been called “Thamudic.”

**thawāb** – reward.

**u‘budū** – (You — meaning *al-ladhīna āmanū* — should) be considerate and amenable in your conformity to Allah (ﷻ)!

**ummaḥ** – the consolidation of a collective will.

**Ummah, the Islamic** – (uppercase reference is always to) the Islamic *ummaḥ* of Muhammad (ﷺ).

**‘Umraḥ** – the lesser Hajj; attending the Sacred Sanctuary in Makkah in a state of *iḥrām*, circling the Ka‘baḥ, and jogging between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwaḥ (no standing at ‘Arafāt is required).

**‘uṣbaḥ** – family and clan solidarity; extended family.

**wahy** – revelation; inspiration.

**walī** – helper, ally, supporter, benefactor, sponsor; guardian, patron; plural is *awliyā’*.

**waṣīy** – *plenipotentiary, authorized agent; regent, trustee.*

**Wadd** – pre-Islamic idol, mentioned in the Qur'an (71:23) as a deity of the people at the time of Prophet Nūḥ (ﷺ). 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās narrates that at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), the pre-Islamic Arabians of Banū Kalb worshipped Wadd in the form of a man. His idol stood in Dūmah al-Jandal.

**Yaghūth** – pre-Islamic idol, mentioned in the Qur'an (71:23) as a deity of the people at the time of Prophet Nūḥ (ﷺ). 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās narrates that at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), the pre-Islamic Arabians of Murād worshipped Yaghūth in the form of a lion.

**Ya'ūq** – pre-Islamic idol, mentioned in the Qur'an (71:23) as a deity of the people at the time of Prophet Nūḥ (ﷺ). 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās narrates that at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), the pre-Islamic Arabians of Hamadān worshipped Ya'ūq in the form of a horse.

**Yawm al-Arbi'ā'** – *the Fourth Day*; the fourth day of the Islamic week, corresponds to Wednesday in the Gregorian week.

**Yawm al-Sabt** – *Sabbath Day*; the seventh day of the Islamic week, corresponds to Saturday in the Gregorian week.

**Yawm al-Zullāh** – *the Overcast Day*; the torment that destroyed the people of Madyan to whom Prophet Shu'ayb (ﷺ) was sent.

**zabāniyah** – *hellish chastisement*; refers to the angels that overlook the Hellfire.

**Zāhiri** – Islamic school of law (*madhhab*) based on the teachings/rulings of its founder, Dāwūd ibn 'Alī ibn Khalaf al-Zāhiri (199–270AH). It is characterized by its reliance on literalist (*ẓāhir*) interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and by its rejection of *qiyās* as a source of Islamic legislation. One of its more influential proponents was

Ibn Ḥazm. Though it is still recognized by contemporary Islamic scholars, the *madhhab* is largely considered to be non-existent.

**zakāh** – *freely paying money as an act of financial maturity*; usually the word is translated as *almsgiving* or *charity*, which not at all renders correctly its original meaning. Many times in the divine Writ the word *zakāh* is preceded by *aqāma*, *yuqīmūna*..., which means that this giving of money has to be institutionalized or regulated.

**zuhd** – *renunciation of pleasure in worldly things, abstinence; asceticism.*



# General Index

## A

- 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās (narrator of hadiths) 159, 275, 347, 350, 360–61
- 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (compiler of hadiths) 353
- 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd (narrator of hadiths) 340
- 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (narrator of hadiths) 223, 353, 359
- Aborigines 108–09, 117, 159
- aboriginal 108–10
- Charles Perkins 109
- Truganini 109
- Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) 109
- Abraham (ﷺ) 53, 114, 183, 302
- Abū Dāwūd (compiler of hadiths) 340, 358
- Abū Ḥanifaḥ (Islamic *faqīh*) 141
- Abū Jahl ibn Hishām 279
- Abū Mūsá al-Ash'arī (narrator of hadiths) 223, 358
- Abū Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī (compiler of hadiths) 339
- Abū al-Shaykh ibn Ḥabbān (compiler of hadiths) 346, 358
- Abū Ṭalḥaḥ al-Anṣārī (narrator of hadiths) 279, 361
- accountability xiv, 3, 107, 195, 203, 247, 319, 324
- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) xv, 104, 288, 293, 306, 348
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) xv, 306
- see also* homosexuality
- Adam (ﷺ) xii–xiii, xxii, 3, 18, 21, 25–26, 44, 48, 51, 56, 62–65, 76, 85, 105–07, 116, 124–45, 156–59, 162, 182, 187–88, 193–95, 198, 243, 254–55, 272, 295, 317, 321
- Adam and Eve (ﷺ) xiii, xxii, 44, 116, 125–28, 132, 134–36, 141, 144, 156, 195, 243
- Seth 134
- Shith 135
- Tree of Knowledge 132–33
- forbidden tree xiii, 127, 132, 140
- see also* Satan

- Adler, Alfred, *see* psychology  
 adultery xv  
 Africa, sub-Saharan 11  
 African Americans xvi, 88, 90, 112,  
 116–19, 305  
 Negro 110  
*see also* racism  
 African Caribbeans 110  
 Afrocentricity 110  
 Afrocentric 110, 112  
 Agnew, Spiro (US vice president) 304  
 agriculture 226, 228–30, 251, 334,  
 341, 345  
 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (Islamic *faqīh*)  
 339, 346, 353, 358  
 ʿĀʾishah, Umm al-Muʾminin 339, 353  
 ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib 202, 346  
 Allah (ﷻ)  
 Lawgiver, the 2  
 Merciful, the i, 6, 201  
 Mercy-Giving, the i, 6  
 Most Gracious, the 3, 53, 55, 207  
 Most High, the 50, 62  
 throne 57, 59, 68, 209–14, 219  
 American Indians 110, 119  
*see also* racism  
 Amnesty International 287  
 Anas ibn Mālik (narrator of hadiths)  
 223, 358  
 angel(s) v, viii, xii, 3, 10, 18, 21,  
 25–26, 48–64, 69, 70, 74–75,  
 125–27, 131–35, 142, 145, 196,  
 232, 243, 275, 302  
 ʿAzrāʾil (ﷻ) 58  
 Gabriel (ﷻ) 51–53, 56–57, 133  
 Jibril (ﷻ) 51, 53, 56  
 Rūḥ al-Qudus 57  
 Rūḥ, the 55  
 Isrāʾīl (ﷻ) 58  
 Michael (ﷻ) 133  
 Mikāʾīl (ﷻ) 56  
 Mālik (ﷻ) 60  
 anthropic principle 28, 35  
 anthropology 34, 89, 111, 214, 242  
 anti-Semitism 299  
 anti-Semitic 89, 300–01  
 Semitic 71, 89, 300–01  
*see also* Jew  
 Arabia 6, 8, 12, 70, 135, 146, 208,  
 253, 264, 317, 330, 361  
 Arabian Peninsula 273  
 Arabians 7, 136, 146, 158, 172, 255  
 al-Ḥijāz 208, 273, 311  
 ʿArafāt, *see* Makkah  
 Arrhenius, Svante,  
*see* greenhouse effect  
 arrogance xii, 20, 25, 105, 171,  
 220, 239–40, 248, 262, 272, 274,  
 308, 360  
 Aryan, *see* Germany  
 al-ʿĀṣī, Muḥammad Ḥ. iii, iv, xii, xviii  
*The Ascendant Qurʾan* iii, iv  
 Asia, Southeast 11, 225  
 Asian American 111  
 Chinese 81, 110–11  
*see also* racism  
 assimilation 79, 86, 90, 111–12, 162  
 astronomy 34, 42, 213, 218, 356–57  
 ʿAṭāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ (narrator of  
 hadiths) 360  
 authority xiv, xviii, 1–6, 9–15, 23,  
 27–28, 32–34, 37–38, 52, 61, 66, 75,  
 106, 116, 121, 126, 139, 161,  
 170–73, 187–88, 194–200, 203,  
 206–09, 215, 219, 223, 229, 232–33,  
 238–40, 243–53, 259, 263–67,  
 272–74, 279–80, 304–05, 309–11,  
 314–18, 326–36  
 authorities 13, 15, 196–97, 200,  
 245, 248, 256, 326, 335  
 temporal authorities 15, 326  
 authority of Allah 1, 6, 9, 13, 15,  
 61, 170, 187, 196–200, 207, 209,  
 232, 243–44, 248, 252, 259, 280,  
 310–11, 315–18, 327–29, 334–36  
 autonomy 38, 77, 155, 250
- B**  
 baby boomers 303–04  
 abortion 305, 307  
 antiwar movement 305  
 Center for Reproductive Rights 305  
 contraceptive 305  
 Days of Rage 304  
 Mario Savio 304

- Free Speech movement 304  
 pill, the 305  
 Prague Spring 304  
 sexual revolution 305, 307  
 women's movement 305  
 Bacon, Frances 337  
   *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* 337–38  
 Badr, Battle of 224, 279  
 Bangash, Zafar xix  
 Banton, Michael 91–92  
   *Race Relations* 91  
   *see also* racism  
 baptism, *see* Christianity  
 al-Baṣrah, *see* Iraq  
 al-Bayhaqī (compiler of hadiths) 350, 353  
 beauty viii, 38–41, 136–39, 143, 158–62, 167–70, 179, 188  
   naked 146, 152, 158–59, 171, 355  
   *see also* clothing  
 Beethoven, Ludwig van 84, 341  
   *Appassionata* 342  
   *Fidelio* 342  
   *Moonlight* 342  
 Belgium, *see* Benelux countries  
 Benedict, Ruth 86n  
   *Race and Racism* 86, 89–95  
   *see also* racism  
 Benelux countries 83, 340  
   Belgium 100, 104, 340  
   Luxemburg 340  
   Netherlands, the 91, 285, 340–41  
 Benne, Robert, *see* economics  
 Bentham, Jeremy, *see* Utilitarianism  
 Bernier, Francois 85  
 Bible, the 27, 82, 133, 336  
   biblical xiii, 33, 44, 45, 85, 89, 133, 145, 302, 318, 342, 360  
   New Testament 71, 133–34, 145, 318, 322  
     Book of Acts of the Apostles 71–72  
     Book of Colossians 322  
     Book of Ephesians 318  
     Book of Jude 302  
     Book of Revelation 44, 46, 53, 145, 343  
     Gospel of Luke 71, 302  
     Gospel of Mark 71  
     Gospel of Matthew 71, 145, 302  
     Synoptic (corresponding) Gospels 71  
   Old Testament 71, 254  
     Book of 1 Samuel 71  
     Book of Genesis 132–33, 254–55, 302, 342, 360  
     Book of Psalms 322  
   Biden, Joseph (US vice president) 290  
   biology 10, 21, 34, 37, 41, 85, 213  
   Black feminism 112  
     *see also* racism  
   Black Power 86, 112  
     *see also* racism  
   Bloomsbury xvii  
   Boy Scouts of America 292  
     *see also* homosexuality, Jew  
   Breyer, Stephen (US justice) 291  
     *see also* homosexuality, Jew  
   Britain 83, 87–95, 110, 112, 116, 155, 241  
     *see also* colonialism, racism  
   Brod, Max, *see* homosexuality  
   Buber, Martin, *see* homosexuality  
   al-Bukhārī 142, 223, 339–40, 353, 358–59, 361  
     *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 223, 353  
   Burckhardt, Jacob, *see* history  
   Byzantines 255
- C**  
 Cain and Abel 134  
   Qābil and Hābil 135  
   *see also* Adam (آدم)  
 Calvin, John, *see* creationism  
 camel ix, 199, 239, 272, 275–77, 361  
 Canada iv, xix  
 capitalism 11, 80–81, 100–03, 112, 321, 324–25, 331  
   capitalist 93, 121, 319–21, 325, 332, 334, 345  
 Carlson, Allan 303  
   *Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society* 303

- see also baby boomers  
 Carlyle, Thomas 99, 155, 343  
   *Chartism* 344  
   *Frederick the Great* 344  
   *The French Revolution* 344  
 see also materialism  
 Carmichael, Stokely 86  
   Kwame Ture 86  
 caste(s) 92, 113  
 Castles, Stephen 94  
   *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* 94  
 Catholic Church 132  
   Catholicism 322, 344  
   Roman Catholic 72, 114, 118, 322, 324  
   see also Christianity  
 Caucasian(s) 113, 116  
   Blumenbach, J.F. 113  
 Cesaire, Aime, see negritude  
 Chamberlain, Houston Stewart 117  
   see also fascism, racism  
 Chardin, Pierre Teilhard de,  
   see theology  
 Charlemagne 84, 340  
   Carolingian Renaissance 341  
   Charles the Great 340  
 Children of Israel xi, 4, 311  
 Christianity 43–45, 71, 89, 133–34, 254, 322, 341, 344  
   baptism 72  
   Christian 11, 27, 36–37, 43–48, 72, 76, 79, 84, 89, 109, 132–35, 145, 254–55, 284, 301–02, 320–25, 341  
   Christians 11, 27, 32, 109, 133, 255, 318, 322–25  
   Church Christianity 43, 134  
   crucifixion 132  
   Holy Spirit 33  
   Original Sin viii, xiii, 44, 46, 132, 135  
   Protestant Reformation 323  
   St. Paul 72, 134, 363  
     Colossians 322, 363  
 clay xii, 20, 25, 64, 75–76, 84, 124, 142, 360  
 Clinton, Bill (US president) xvii, 294  
 clothing 139–40, 144, 159–61, 178–80, 318, 322, 345–46  
   see also beauty  
 clouds 208, 210, 215–18, 224–27, 270, 356  
 Codreanu, Corneliu, see fascism  
 colonialism 98, 113  
 color line 113  
 communism 102, 118  
   Communists 102, 103  
   see also capitalism, Marxism  
 consumerism xvi, 140  
 consumption xvi–xvii, 230  
 corruption 124, 140, 210, 222, 239–40, 243, 264, 266, 272, 276, 309, 314–16, 334  
 cosmogony 28, 30  
 cosmology 28–29, 34–35  
   Big Bang 35, 216, 357  
   cosmic background radiation 35  
   Newton, Isaac 35–36  
 Cox, Oliver 92–94  
   *Caste, Class and Race* 92  
   see also racism  
 creationism viii, 25, 27, 45, 48  
   argument from design in nature 43–44  
   contingency 36, 39, 47  
   *creatio ex nihilo* 33, 39  
   creation xii, 4, 22, 25–48, 55–56, 60, 64, 80, 83, 88, 91, 107, 124–27, 131–34, 157, 208–15, 218–19, 241, 283–84, 317, 319, 322  
   Creator, the 2, 33, 38–41, 63–64, 74–75, 105, 132, 214, 218  
   Genesis account 27  
   John Calvin 33  
   origination 39  
   primary principle 29, 31  
   radical self-gift of God 38–41  
   scientific creationism 45  
   St. Augustine 32–33, 132  
   St. Thomas Aquinas 32–33  
   theory of everything 34, 37  
   see also evolution  
 Crescent International iv, xix  
 crucifixion, see Christianity



culture iii–iv, viii, xii, xvi, xviii, 27,  
76–81, 86, 97–99, 108, 116, 120–21,  
140, 144, 148, 153, 158, 160–62,  
170–73, 180, 184, 195, 228, 242,  
246, 248, 252, 283–87, 290, 296,  
305, 307, 316, 348  
Islamic culture 162, 171–72  
*jāhili* culture 172  
non-scriptural cultures 172  
Cuvier, George 85, 116  
*see also* racism

## D

Darwin, Charles, *see* evolution  
David (ﺩﺍﻭﺩ) 71  
day xiii–xiv, 2–9, 14, 16–17, 20–21,  
25, 33, 49, 52–55, 58–59, 66–67,  
73–74, 106–07, 129–30, 133, 136,  
139, 142, 153, 158, 162, 167, 170,  
187, 193–95, 198, 206–15, 219, 222,  
224, 233, 247, 251, 253, 260, 270,  
275–79, 283, 302, 312–15, 320,  
334, 361  
days 4, 52, 60, 212, 221, 225,  
269, 275–78, 298–99, 304, 314,  
349, 360  
Day of Judgement xiii, xiv, 8, 67, 73,  
106, 130, 142, 193, 194, 206  
Day of Accountability xiv, 3,  
107, 247  
Day of Ascertained Time (Yawm al-  
Waqt al-Ma'lūm) 106  
Day of Reckoning 74, 215  
Day of Resurrection 2, 21, 106, 129,  
139, 158, 170, 198  
Final Day xiv, 3, 16, 49, 52, 187,  
195, 253  
Judgement Day 6, 14–17, 195, 260  
death 10, 15, 22, 35, 44, 47, 50, 58,  
62, 84, 133–34, 164, 174, 195–97,  
223, 233, 257, 269–72, 311, 341, 362  
Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) 291  
*see also* homosexuality  
Degrelle, Leon, *see* fascism  
democracy 88, 120, 261, 331  
Deutsch, Karl 79  
*see also* nationalism

Devil, *see* Satan  
discrimination 13, 79, 87, 108–10,  
114, 119, 121, 153–54, 284, 287–88,  
292, 294, 297, 326  
Jim Crow Laws 117  
divinity xviii, 3, 5, 31, 66, 139,  
170–71, 196, 209, 315, 318  
*see also* authority  
Djavadov, Maksud xix  
Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt  
90, 343  
National Association for the  
Advancement of Colored People  
(NAACP) 343  
*see also* racism  
Dunbar, William 85

## E

Earth, the 4–5, 18, 25, 56, 70,  
133–34, 208–14, 218–19, 223–30,  
251, 254, 257–58, 270, 322  
earthquake 229, 239, 241, 273,  
313, 361  
economics ix, 34, 86, 89, 214, 309,  
317, 320–26  
Adam Smith 317, 321  
free market 321, 325  
*The Wealth of Nations* 321  
Christian capitalist 321  
E.R. Norman 321  
Robert Benne 321  
William Lawrence 321  
Christian socialist 321  
F.D. Maurice 321  
Leonhard Ragaz 321  
Walter Rauschenbusch 321  
econometrics 317  
economic justice 320  
economic opportunities 323  
economic power 319, 324  
economic thought 319–22, 325  
economist xvi, xvii, xix, 317  
economy 78, 88, 101, 111, 304, 314,  
317–20, 323–24, 334  
ecumenical 318, 321, 322  
inflation 315, 317  
macroeconomics 317

- microeconomics 317  
 production 22, 93, 101, 179, 185,  
 229, 318–19, 322–24, 348  
 stewardship 318–19, 324  
 unemployment 317  
 ego 107, 108, 131, 140, 144, 173, 343  
   *see also* psychology  
 Einstein, Albert 36, 298  
   *see also* homosexuality,  
   quantum physics  
 Eisenhower, Dwight D.  
   (US president) 303  
 elites xiv, 80–82, 123, 143, 146, 153,  
 172–73, 199, 203, 228, 247–50, 253,  
 258–68, 272, 274, 276, 309–12,  
 316–17, 327–33  
 elitists 10, 260  
 emancipation 81, 114, 345  
 empiricism 24, 337  
   British Empiricists 337  
   experience xii–xiii, xxi, 34, 48, 63,  
   92, 95–96, 108, 110, 112, 126,  
   129, 155, 165, 174–75, 178, 197,  
   198–99, 208, 211, 241, 266, 280,  
   283, 333, 337, 351  
   *tabula rasa* 337  
   *see also* philosophy  
 empowerment 114  
 Enlightenment, *see* Europe  
 equality xviii, 11, 13, 87–88, 108,  
 151–52, 261, 285, 292–93, 305, 343  
 ethnicism 100, 105  
 ethnicity 13, 82, 91, 95–98, 108, 252  
   ethnic 13, 79–97, 100, 104–05, 108,  
   110, 113, 118–19, 123  
   *ethnie* 81–82  
   multiculturalism 119  
 eugenics 85, 342  
   Francis Galton 85, 342  
   *Hereditary Genius* 342  
 Europe 11, 79, 81–84, 88–91, 94–98,  
 101, 104, 112, 116, 120–23, 179,  
 226, 247, 284–89, 299, 304, 320,  
 325, 341  
   Council of Europe 287  
   Eastern Europe 81, 101, 104, 112,  
   116, 325  
   Enlightenment, the 79, 229  
   European Union 83  
     Brexit 84  
   Industrial Revolution 230  
   Middle Ages 45, 85, 178  
   Renaissance, the 83, 112, 229, 242,  
   341, 359  
   Western Europe 89, 94, 120, 123,  
   179, 289, 325  
 Eve (夏娃) xiii, xxii, 44, 116, 125–28,  
 132–36, 140–41, 144, 156, 195, 243  
 Hawwā' (夏娃) xiii, 144  
   *see also* Adam (夏娃), Satan  
 evil xiii, 3–4, 41, 44, 47, 67, 69–74, 99,  
 105, 107, 126, 130–33, 137, 145,  
 147, 155, 191, 199, 208, 238, 263,  
 270, 273, 277–78, 300  
 evildoers 21, 65, 124, 141, 192,  
 199, 308  
 evildoing 192, 278  
 evolution 4, 26–30, 41–48, 83, 114,  
 143, 172  
   Alfred Russel Wallace 114  
   Charles Darwin 43–45, 85, 114, 342  
     *On the Origin of Species* 43,  
     85, 114  
     *The Descent of Man* 43  
   cosmic evolution 42  
   evolutionism viii, 25, 27  
   genetics 34, 43, 46, 85  
   gradualist school 26  
   Gregor Mendel 43  
   neo-Darwinism 43, 114  
   paleontology 41  
     paleontologists 43  
   punctuated equilibria school 26  
   socio-biology 85  
   theory of biological evolution 42–43  
     natural selection 42–45, 114  
     survival of the fittest 42, 114  
   *see also* creationism  
 existentialism 23–24  
   existence 4, 21–24, 27, 30, 35,  
   38–39, 44, 49–50, 63–64, 75,  
   84–86, 92, 95, 105, 130, 154, 178,  
   198, 208, 212, 216, 231–32, 247,  
   249, 252, 324, 338  
   existentialists 23–24  
   finitude 24

Blaise Pascal 23  
 Friedrich Nietzsche 23, 99,  
 155–56, 344  
 Gabriel Marcel 23  
 Jean-Paul Sartre 23, 155–56  
 Karl Jaspers 23  
 Martin Heidegger 23  
 Miguel de Unamuno 23  
 Soren Kierkegaard 23  
 exorcism 71–72, 145  
 Theravada Buddhist 71  
 Nats 71  
 Phi 71  
*see also* Christianity, Satan  
 exploitation 10, 92–93, 113, 115, 119,  
 200, 260, 320  
 extravagance 162, 169, 282, 341  
 Ezekiel 302

## F

fascism 99–104, 285  
 authoritarian 88–89, 102, 120, 330  
 Adolf Hitler 101–02, 117, 120,  
 299–300  
 Benito (Amilcare Andrea)  
 Mussolini 99–03, 344  
 British Movement (BM) 121  
 Corneliu Codreanu 100  
 fascist 88, 99–104, 120–21, 344  
 fascist socialism 101  
 fascists 100–03  
 Ferencz Szalasi 100  
 Francisco Franco 102  
 Jose Antonio Primo de River 100  
 Lateran Treaty 344  
 Leon Degrelle 100  
 National Front 121  
 Nazi Germany 100–01, 104, 111  
 Nazism 91, 99, 103, 120  
 Nazi 100–04, 111, 120, 285,  
 299–300, 344  
 Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 102  
 Nazis 91, 101, 103, 285, 290,  
 295–96, 300–01  
 neo-Nazism 120  
 neo-fascism 100  
 Oswald Mosley 100  
 Pact of Steel 101  
 totalitarianism 99, 102–03, 335  
 fashion viii, 2, 37, 95, 140, 143, 150,  
 178–80, 184, 316, 345–46  
 accessory viii, 136, 345  
 apparel 145, 181, 345  
 attire viii, 158, 162, 169, 180, 345  
 beau 345  
 bondage 345  
 canonicals 345  
 Charles Worth 179  
 civvies 345  
 coordinates 130, 345  
 cosmetics industry 179  
 couturier 179, 345  
 dowdy 345  
 drapery 345  
 duds 345  
 ensemble 345  
 fashion culture 140  
 finery 345  
 frippery 345  
 garb xiii, 169, 345  
 garment 65, 137–40, 182, 345  
 haberdashery 346  
 habiliments 346  
 habit 346  
 haute couture 346  
 layette 346  
 livery 346  
 raiment 346  
 sartorial 346  
 unisex 346  
 weeds 346  
*see also* beauty, clothing,  
 extravagance  
 feminists 150–52  
 Feyerabend, Paul Karl 354  
*Against Method* 354  
*see also* philosophy  
 Fichte, Johann Gottlieb 99, 343  
*Critique of Religious Revelation* 343  
*The Science of Knowledge* 343  
*see also* philosophy  
 fire xii, xiv, 1, 4, 20, 25, 49, 51, 60, 64,  
 67, 70, 75–76, 84, 99, 105, 130, 142,  
 188, 191–94, 197–207, 221, 260,  
 302, 314

- Fire, the xiv, 1, 4, 49, 60, 64, 67, 70, 130, 188, 191–94, 197–207, 221, 260, 302
- food 62, 112, 161–70, 177, 182, 187, 200, 228, 318, 322, 347–49
- appetite 163–69, 347
- amphetamines 166
  - Cholecystokinin 165
  - dexfenfluramine 166
  - galanin 165
  - leptin 168
  - Neuropeptide Y 165
  - phenylpropanolamine 166
- candidiasis 347–48
- Candida albicans* 348
- dieting 164–69, 183
- diets 161, 164, 167–68, 349
  - obesity 162, 164, 168
    - obese 164, 167–68, 350
  - starvation 164, 167–68
  - yo-yo dieting 168
- eating disorders 163–65
- anorexia nervosa 163–64, 167, 350
  - William Gull 350
  - bulimia nervosa 163–64, 167, 350
  - overeating 162–64, 168–69, 347
  - compulsive overeating 163–64
- food allergy 347–49
- hunger 163–66
- Fourier, Joseph, *see* greenhouse effect
- France 83, 91, 95, 100, 104, 116, 225
- French 79, 82, 85, 99, 116, 120, 146, 155, 179, 231, 304, 344
  - French Revolution 79, 120, 344
  - Napoleon Bonaparte 84, 99, 341
- see also* colonialism, nationalism
- Franco, Francisco, *see* fascism
- Frazier, E. Franklin 90
- see also* racism
- free will 72, 107, 132
- freedom of choice 65–66, 72
- freedom xviii, 12–13, 23–24, 28, 38, 40–41, 47, 65–68, 72, 77, 107, 109, 125, 149–52, 250, 294, 303–04, 307–08, 331
- Freud, Sigmund 173–78, 299, 351–52
- free association 175–76
  - psychiatry 175
  - psychoanalysis 175–76, 351–54
    - subconscious 173, 351
    - unconscious 173–78, 351
- see also* psychology, sexuality
- Frobenius, Leo, *see* negritude
- ## G
- galaxy 215–18, 251, 354–57
- Andromeda 215, 355–56
  - black hole 216–17
  - elliptical galaxies 217
    - dwarf ellipticals 217
  - irregular galaxies 203, 217, 307, 356
  - Local Group 215, 217, 355–56
  - Local Supercluster 217
  - Magellanic Clouds 356
  - spiral galaxies 217, 356
  - Virgo cluster 217
- Galbraith, John Kenneth 304
- The Affluent Society* 304
- see also* baby boomers, economics
- Galileo Galilei 218, 357
- Galton, Francis, *see* eugenics
- Garden of Eden 132–33
- Garden of Bliss 105, 201, 205
- Gates Jr., Henry Louis 97
- The Signifying Monkey* 97
- see also* racism
- Gaulle, Charles de (French president) 304
- gender xv, 55, 62, 65, 97–98, 110, 112, 121, 248, 283, 286
- gender exclusivism 283
- Genesis *Rabbah*, *see* Judaism
- Germany 79, 83, 91, 95, 100–04, 111, 116–17, 120–21, 285, 295–300, 342, 356
- Aryan 111, 296
  - German 99, 120, 155, 181, 295–96, 340–43
- see also* fascism, racism
- ghetto(s) 115–16, 123
- see also* poverty, racism
- Ginsburg, Ruth Bader (US justice) 291
- see also* homosexuality

- Gliddon, George Robbins,  
   *see* hereditarianism
- Gobineau, Arthur de 85, 117  
   *see also* racism
- Goldberg, David 96  
   *Anatomy of Racism* 96  
   *see also* racism
- good and evil 132–33
- Great Depression 304  
   *see also* baby boomers, economics
- Greek 10, 22, 71, 108, 116, 118, 120,  
   123, 150, 174, 179, 212, 284, 318,  
   320, 337, 359
- greenhouse effect 229–31  
   acid rain 230  
   carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) 229–30, 270  
   chlorofluorocarbons 230  
   Joseph Fourier 231  
   methane 230  
   ozone 230  
   Svante Arrhenius 231  
   water vapor 226–27, 230
- Gull, William, *see* food
- H**
- ha-adamah* 133
- hadith 51, 56, 58, 60, 63, 124, 169,  
   201, 207, 221, 223, 255, 279, 339,  
   346–47, 353
- Ḥaḍramawt, *see* Yemen
- Hajj, *see* Makkah
- Hamilton, C.V. 86  
   *see also* racism
- Ḥanzalaḥ ibn al-Rabī'ah (narrator of  
   hadiths) 49, 339
- Harlem Renaissance 112
- Ḥawwā' (Ḥ), *see* Eve (Ḥ)
- al-Haythamī (compiler of hadiths) 353
- Heaven 13, 54, 59, 69, 125, 191, 195,  
   199, 202–05, 231, 244, 248, 268,  
   306, 317
- Hebrew 89, 145, 182, 255, 320, 360  
   *see also* Israel, Judaism
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 31,  
   99, 242, 344  
   *see also* creationism, fascism
- hegemony 82, 116, 273
- Heidegger, Martin, *see* existentialism
- Hell viii, xiv, 20, 25, 59–60, 67–68,  
   74, 123, 133, 188, 192, 194,  
   199–205, 222, 305
- Herder, Johann Gottfried,  
   *see* nationalism
- hereditarianism 116  
   Charles Hamilton Smith 116  
   George Cuvier 116  
   George Robbins Gliddon 117  
   hereditary 116, 342  
   Josiah Clark Nott 117  
   Karl Vogt 117  
   Paracelsus 116  
   Robert Knox 116
- hermaphrodite 281, 362
- Herschel, Frederick William 215, 356  
   Caroline Herschel 356  
   John Herschel 356  
   Uranus 215, 356  
   *see also* astronomy, Milky Way
- al-Hijāz, *see* Arabia
- Hiller, Kurt, *see* homosexuality
- Hirschfeld, Magnus, *see* homosexuality
- history xiii, 2–3, 6–9, 21, 31, 34–38,  
   41–44, 47, 75–88, 91, 111–12, 124,  
   127, 132, 145, 153, 174, 193, 218,  
   232–33, 241–50, 253, 255, 258,  
   267, 271, 279, 284–85, 294, 306,  
   310, 316–17, 320, 328, 336, 343–44,  
   359, 362  
   economic history 241, 243  
   ethno-history 82, 84, 242  
   history of science 242  
   human history xiii, 2, 9, 75, 153,  
     193, 218, 232, 243, 246, 248, 253,  
     279, 284  
   Jacob Christopher Burckhardt  
     242, 359  
     *Die Kultur der Renaissance in*  
       *Italien (The Civilization of the*  
       *Renaissance in Italy)* 242  
   political history 243  
   social history 243
- Hitler, Adolf 101–02, 117, 120,  
   299–300  
   *see also* fascism, Germany, racism
- Hobbes, Thomas, *see* materialism

- Hodann, Max, *see* homosexuality  
 Holy Sanctuary, *see* Makkah  
 Holy Spirit, *see* Christianity  
 homosexuality ix, xv–xviii, 153–54, 157, 279, 282–90, 295–301, 308, 362  
 anti-sodomy law 296  
 Berlin (Germany) 285, 296, 298, 343, 359  
 Albert Einstein 298  
 Albert Moll 300  
 Grete Meisel-Hess 298  
 Kurt Hiller 298  
 Magnus Hirschfeld 285, 297–300  
 Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute for Sexual Science) 298  
 Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee (Scientific Humanitarian Committee) 285, 297  
 Martin Buber 298  
 Max Brod 298  
 Max Hodann 299  
 sexology 299–300  
 Stefan Zweig 298  
*Völkischer Beobachter* 300–01  
 C.H. Ulrichs 285  
 coming out 124, 231, 286  
 outing 153  
 Cultural Relaxation Center 285  
 gay xvii, 153–54, 284–97  
 gay liberation 153–54, 293, 297  
 gay marriage 291  
 gay politics 284  
 Gay Pride demonstrations 286  
 gay rights movement 289  
 gay subculture 285–86  
 gays 154, 285–87, 292  
 homophobia 297, 307  
 homosexual xvii, 154, 285–99  
 homosexuals 153–54, 259, 285–86, 289–92, 296–301, 307  
 International Committee for Sexual Equality (ISCE) 285  
 International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) 287  
*Pink Books* 287  
 J.A. Schorer 285  
 lesbian 284–89, 292–93, 301  
 International Lesbian Information Service (ILIS) 287–88  
 lesbian feminism 286  
 lesbianism 286  
 lesbians 154, 285–89, 296, 301  
 lesbian and gay lobby 289  
 lesbian/gay movement 289  
 LGBT rights 290, 292  
 Movimiento Homosexual de Lima (Homosexual Movement of Lima) 288  
 Pink Triangle Monument 285  
 same-sex marriages 284  
 sexual orientation 110, 282, 284, 294  
 Stonewall riots 285–86  
 uranism 285  
 Hubble, Edwin Powell 216, 357–58  
 Hubble constant 357  
 Hubble Space Telescope 218, 358  
 European Space Agency 358  
 National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) 358  
 Hubble's law 357  
*see also* astronomy  
 Hūd (هود) ix, xiv, 4, 238, 245, 263–73, 310–13, 360  
 ʿĀd (ancient Arabian tribe) ix, 238–39, 263–73, 276, 360  
 cyclone(s) 269–71, 361  
 hurricane(s) 270–71, 361  
 storm(s) 268–71, 361  
 thunderstorm 270  
 typhoon(s) 269–71, 361  
 Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), *see* Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)  
 human nature viii, 61, 74, 106–07, 124–29, 132, 144, 171–72, 179–80, 186, 232, 241–44, 248, 253, 260, 262, 266, 280, 283, 316, 319  
 Hume, David 85  
*see also* racism  
 Huntington, Samuel P. 306  
 clash of civilizations 306

## I

Ibn 'Asākir (compiler of hadiths) 360  
 Ibn Kathīr (*mufassir*) 311, 339  
*Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* 339  
 Ibn Mājah (compiler of hadiths) 339, 350, 353  
 Ibn Mardawayh (compiler of hadiths) 350  
 Ibn Mas'ūd (narrator of hadiths) 346  
 idealism 10, 343  
*see also* philosophy  
 ideology 11, 45, 76–77, 87, 89, 91, 96, 100–04, 119, 147, 196, 261, 286–87, 296, 299, 340, 344  
 Destutt de Tracy 340  
 ideological 10, 77–80, 94–97, 102, 119–20, 248, 262, 310, 324–25, 340  
 ideologies 11, 76, 93, 96–99, 105, 123, 331, 340  
 idols xviii, 14, 136, 246, 256, 264, 268  
 idol-worshipping 5  
 veneration of idols xviii  
 Nasr 256–57  
 Suwā' 256–57  
 Wadd 256–57  
 Yaghūth 256–57  
 Ya'ūq 256–57  
 immorality 147–48, 157, 259, 261  
 immortality xiii, 10, 81, 360  
 imperialism 9, 79, 87, 113, 143, 260  
 imperialist 101, 117, 260  
 imperialists xiii, 80, 261  
 incest xv  
 India 111, 123, 225, 255  
 Industrial Revolution, *see* Europe  
 inequality xviii, 15, 92–96  
*see also* nationalism, racism  
 injustice 15–17, 170, 172, 200, 203, 207, 223, 259, 267, 269, 325, 327, 329–31  
 Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought (ICIT) iii–v, xix  
 intellect 23, 63, 131, 156  
 intellectual iv, viii, 18, 85, 110, 112, 117, 134, 173, 242, 253, 306, 318  
 Iran 111, 249

Persian 70–72, 172  
 Persians 81–82, 255  
 Iraq  
 al-Baṣrah 1  
 al-Kūfah 1  
 Iṣḥāq ibn Bishr (compiler of hadiths) 360  
 Islamic movement iv, 247, 312, 329, 331  
 Islamophobe xii  
 Israel xi, 4, 154, 180–82, 185, 290–93, 311  
*Haaretz* 290  
*Jerusalem Post* 290–91, 293  
*Jewish Quarterly* 294, 295  
*Jspace* Jewish news network 291  
*JWeekly* Jewish news service 292  
 Samaria 302  
 Tel Aviv 290  
*Times of Israel* 292  
*see also* homosexuality, Jew, Yahūd, Zionism  
 Italy 83, 99, 100–04, 226, 242, 341, 344, 357  
*see also* fascism  
 J  
 Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh (narrator of hadiths) 358  
 Jaspers, Karl, *see* existentialism  
 Jenkins, Roy 86  
*see also* racism  
 Jesus (ﷺ) xxii, 33, 47, 57, 71, 132, 134, 302, 305, 322  
 Jew(s) 11, 32, 82, 115–20, 186, 255, 290, 291, 294–95, 298–301  
 Albert and Felice Lippert 182  
 Albert List 183  
 Elaine Winik 185  
 Gerald Levin 182  
 Haas (family) 182  
 Hassenfeld (family) 182  
 Heinz Eppler 181  
 Henry Crown 181  
 Herman Cone 181  
 Irving, Morris, and Harry Stone 184  
 Jewish 11, 71–72, 77, 108, 132,

- 181–86, 289–300, 322, 362  
 Joseph Saul 184  
 Judeo-Christian 11, 27, 76, 133, 135,  
 145, 254–55, 284, 301–02, 322  
 Lawrence and Preston Tisch 185  
 Leonard and Ronald Lauder 182  
 Leslie Wexner 185  
 Lou Wasserman 185  
 Louis Barnett 180  
 Melvin and Howard Simon 184  
 Michael Bloomberg 181  
 Michael Eisner 181  
 Morris Levinson 182  
 Morris Zale 186  
 Nicholas Pritzker 183  
 Richard Smith 184  
 Ronald Perelman 183  
 Samuel Stoneman 185  
 Stanley Marcus 183–84  
 Stephen Spielberg 184  
 Sumner and Stanley Feldberg 181  
 Sumner Redstone 183  
 Sy Syms 185  
 Theodore “Ted” Arison 180  
 Victor Carter 181  
*see also* Christianity,  
 imperialism, Zionism  
 Jewish Supremacists (leading the  
 normalization of homosexuality)  
 290, 294, 295, 362  
 Alan Klein 293  
   Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against  
   Defamation (GLAAD) 293  
   Queer Nation 293  
 Allan Ginsburg 294  
   North American Man Boy Love  
   Association 294  
 American Jewish World Service 291  
 Anti-Defamation League (ADL)  
 121, 185, 292–93  
 Arnie Kantrowitz 293  
 Barney Frank 294  
 Bella Abzug 293  
 Evan Wolfson 294  
   Freedom to Marry 294  
   Lambda Legal Defense and  
   Education Fund 294  
 Israel Fishman 293  
 Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and  
 Transgendered Round  
 Table 293  
 Jonathan D. Katz 293  
 Harvey Milk Institute 293  
 Judy Wieder 294  
   *The Advocate* 294  
 Kevin Koffler 294  
   *Genre* 294  
 Larry Kramer 293  
   ACT UP 293  
   Gay Men’s Health Crisis 293  
 Len Hirsch 294  
   GLOBE 270, 294  
 National Coalition of Jewish  
 Women 291  
 National Jewish Committee 292  
 Rabbinical Assembly 291  
 Roberta Achtenberg 294  
 Union for Reform Judaism 291  
*see also* homosexuality  
 jihad 9  
 jinn viii, xii, 51, 62–71, 74, 142, 145,  
 197, 198, 202  
 demons 2, 71, 72, 145  
*see also* Satan  
 Johnson, Charles S. 90  
*see also* racism  
 Johnson, Lyndon (US president)  
 118, 304  
 Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im 359  
 Judaism 71, 89, 133–34, 254,  
 290–95, 301  
   *Genesis Rabbah* 134  
   Talmud 71  
   Yahweh 133, 302  
 Jung, Carl Gustav 173–78, 351  
   analytical psychology 173, 351  
   collective unconscious 174, 176,  
   178, 351  
   direct association 175  
   dreams 174–78  
   International Psychoanalytic  
   Association 351  
   *Wandlungen und Symbole der*  
   *Libido (The Psychology of the*  
   *Unconscious)* 351  
*see also* Freud, psychology



justice viii, xviii, 11–15, 54, 59, 77,  
88, 115, 149, 153, 156–57, 161, 200,  
203–04, 207, 209, 248, 250, 258,  
261, 267, 297, 313–24, 328–31  
social justice xviii, 156–57, 322

## K

Kaa, Dirk van de 303  
see also baby boomers  
Ka'bah, see Makkah  
Kagan, Elena (US justice) 291  
see also homosexuality  
Kant, Immanuel 79, 133, 154–55, 343  
see also morality, nationalism,  
philosophy  
Kedourie, Elie 79  
see also nationalism  
Kennedy, John F. (US president)  
110, 303  
Keynes, John Maynard xvi, xvii,  
xix, 317  
Keynesian xviii, 241, 317  
see also economics, homosexuality  
Khan, Afeef iv, xviii  
Khan, Imran xix  
Kierkegaard, Soren, see existentialism  
kings vii, 14, 127, 161, 249, 302  
Kingsley, Charles 85  
see also racism  
Knox, Robert, see hereditarianism  
Kosack, Godula 94  
*Immigrant Workers and Class*  
*Structure in Western Europe* 94  
see also racism  
Ku Klux Klan 118, 121  
see also racism  
al-Kūfaḥ, see Iraq  
Kuhn, Thomas S., see philosophy  
Kurth, James 306  
see also baby boomers

## L

Latinos 118–19  
Hispanics 118  
law(s) xii, 110, 146, 249, 258, 264,  
266, 282–83, 315, 331

common law 110, 146  
secular laws xii, 315  
social law(s) 222, 228, 249, 258,  
264, 266, 271, 282–83, 331, 335  
see also *sunnah*

Lawrence, William, see economics  
Levant 255, 311  
libido 173–75, 351  
see also Freud, psychology  
life cycle 21–22  
fertilization 21–22, 280–81, 362  
gametes 21–22, 281  
sexual reproduction 281  
zygote 281, 362  
Lincoln, Abraham (US president) 114  
Emancipation Proclamation 114  
see also racism  
Linnaeus, Carolus 85  
see also racism  
Locke, John 85, 337–38  
*An Essay Concerning Human*  
*Understanding* 338  
*Metaphysical Agnosticism* 338  
*Nihilism* 338  
see also empiricism, racism  
Lopokova, Lydia xvii  
see also Keynes  
Lot (𐤋𐤏) xv, 109, 188, 229,  
245, 301–02  
Canaan 302, 342  
Dead Sea 302  
Gomorraḥ 301–02  
Lūt (𐤋𐤏𐤔) ix, xiv, 4, 53–54, 245, 259,  
279–82, 307, 310–13  
Sodom 133, 301–02  
see also homosexuality  
Lucifer, see Satan  
Luther, Martin 132  
Luxemburg, see Benelux countries

## M

macroscopic physics,  
see quantum physics  
Madinah xi, 1, 361  
Madyan, see Shu'ayb (𐤌𐤎𐤏)  
Makkah xi, xiv, 1, 136, 208  
'Arafāt 135, 158, 347

- Ka'bah 136, 146, 158–59, 171  
 Hajj 158  
 Holy Sanctuary 136  
 Makkan 194  
 Miná 159, 347  
 al-Muzdalifah 347  
 Mālik ibn Anas (Islamic *faqih*) 141  
 Marcel, Gabriel, *see* existentialism  
 marriage xv–xvii, 152, 154, 255, 291–93, 303  
 Marxism 10, 92–94, 102, 113, 340, 354  
 Marxist 92–95, 115, 241–42, 321, 324  
*see also* materialism, racism  
 Mary (ﷺ) 133  
 Maryam (ﷺ) 53  
*see also* Jesus (ﷺ)  
 materialism 10, 31, 241–42, 250, 360  
 Baron d'Holbach 10  
 currency 78, 326, 332  
 Darwinism 10, 43, 45, 114  
 debt xvii, 332–35  
 debt service 334  
 Democritus 10  
 Denis Diderot 10  
 dialectical materialism 10  
 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels 10, 93  
 drug trade 332–33  
 Epicurus 10  
 Epicurean materialism 10  
 free trade 333  
 human trafficking 333  
 Julien Offray de La Mettrie 10  
 Leucippus 10  
 loans 320, 332, 334  
 Lucretius 10  
*De rerum natura (On the Nature of Things)* 10  
 materialistic 11, 80, 140, 141, 142, 169, 230, 321, 331  
 materialist(s) 10, 51, 319  
 money xvii, 143, 173, 205, 222, 228, 298, 305, 312, 315–16, 320, 331–33  
 Thomas Hobbes 10, 337  
 Maurice, F.D., *see* economics  
 Meisel-Hess, Grete, *see* homosexuality  
 Mendel, Gregor, *see* evolution  
 mercy i, viii, 6, 21, 129–36, 187, 198, 201, 204, 207, 222, 233, 245, 257, 262, 265, 275, 327  
 Miles, Robert 94, 96  
*Racism and Migrant Labor* 94  
*see also* racism  
 Milky Way 215–18, 354, 355–57  
 Coalsack Nebula 354  
 Harlow Shapley 215, 356  
 Sagittarius 215, 354, 356  
*see also* galaxy, universe  
 Mill, John Stuart, *see* Utilitarianism  
 Miná, *see* Makkah  
 al-Miqdām ibn Ma'dikarib (narrator of hadiths) 353  
 miracle(s) xvi, 72, 275–78, 302, 305, 307  
 miraculous 3, 62, 275  
 modernization 79–80, 103  
*see also* materialism, West  
 modesty viii, 158, 160, 162, 172, 188  
*see also* beauty, clothing  
 Moll, Albert, *see* homosexuality  
 Moon, the 4, 18, 208–09, 211, 214, 218–19, 251  
 morality viii, 12, 142–47, 155–56, 187, 305, 329, 343–44  
 moral xiv, xviii, 12, 82, 100, 136, 144, 151–57, 180, 186, 220, 231, 254, 283, 301, 305–08, 320–21, 333  
 Morris, Desmond 152  
*The Naked Ape* 152  
*see also* pornography  
 Moses (ﷺ) 4, 133, 245  
 Mūsá (ﷺ) xi, xiv, 4, 245, 311  
 Mosley, Oswald, *see* fascism  
 Muhammad (ﷺ) v, xxi, 6, 9, 12, 50, 52, 57, 69, 136, 147, 158, 194, 245, 260, 274, 279, 360  
 Prophet (ﷺ), the vii, ix, xi, xxi, 3, 8–9, 14, 49, 51–52, 57, 140, 146, 158, 187, 201, 207–11, 221, 223–24, 247, 257, 273, 279, 302, 309, 330, 339, 347, 353, 359  
 Mujāhid ibn Jabr 358

- Muller, Friedrich Max, *see* religion
- Munir, Hassam xix
- Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj (compiler of hadiths) 142, 339–40, 347, 353, 358  
*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 255, 339, 359
- Mussolini, Benito, *see* fascism
- al-Muzdalifah, *see* Makkah
- N**
- nakedness xiii, 21, 65, 126, 128, 134, 137, 139, 141, 144–47, 188, 342  
*see also* Adam (آدم), clothing, Satan
- Napoleon Bonaparte, *see* France
- nationalism viii, xviii, 74–84, 100, 120, 326, 343  
 core doctrine 77
- Johann Gottfried Herder 77
- myths 78, 81–84, 150, 176, 178
- nation(s) 12–13, 76–86, 101, 108, 111–15, 121–22, 146, 148, 153, 156, 198, 230, 238, 246, 274, 284, 287, 290–93, 303, 319, 321, 333, 343
- nation-states 82–83, 121
- national identity 83, 86
- nationalisms 80–83, 104, 326
- nationalist(s) 10, 76–78, 96, 121
- zeitgeist 79, 242, 340
- Nazism, *see* fascism
- negritude 120
- Aime Cesaire 120
- L.V. Thomas 120
- Leo Frobenius 120
- Leopold Senghor 120  
*see also* racism
- Netherlands, *see* Benelux countries
- New Age 173, 186, 303, 351  
 European Green parties 351  
 monism 351  
*see also* baby boomers, Jung
- New Testament, *see* Bible
- New Zealand 287
- Newton, Isaac, *see* cosmology
- Nietzsche, Friedrich 23, 99, 155–56, 344  
*see also* existentialism, materialism
- night 4, 6, 14–15, 55, 159, 208–11, 214–15, 219, 225, 251, 305, 341, 347, 354  
 night and day 4, 219  
*see also* day
- al-Nisā'i (compiler of hadiths) 346, 350
- Nixon, Richard (US president) 304  
*see also* baby boomers
- Noah (نوح) 245, 254–55, 342, 360  
 ark 238, 254–58, 263, 360  
 Flood, the 254–55, 258, 264, 342, 360  
 Gilgamesh Epic 255, 360  
 Babylonian flood 255
- Ham 85, 254, 256, 342
- Japheth 254, 256, 342
- Mt. Ararat 254
- Mt. Jūdiy 258
- Nūḥ (نوح) ix, xiv, 4, 233, 238, 245, 251–66, 272–73, 310–13
- Shem 254–55, 342
- Norman, E.R., *see* economics
- Nott, Josiah Clark, *see* hereditarianism
- nudity xiii, 127, 143–44, 172–73, 186  
*see also* clothing, materialism, pornography, West
- O**
- obscenity viii, 144–47, 153, 157  
*see also* pornography
- Old Testament, *see* Bible
- oppression 13, 119, 163, 200, 203, 223, 231, 253, 267, 269, 288  
 oppressors 200, 203, 205
- Original Sin, *see* Christianity
- Otto I (Otto the Great) 84, 341
- Oxfam xviii, xix
- P**
- Palestine 226, 278, 311  
 Jerusalem 290–93, 302, 353
- pantheism 31, 351
- Paradise viii, xii–xiii, xiv, 1–4, 17, 25, 49, 130–35, 188, 191–93, 200–07, 221, 232
- Park, Robert E. 90  
*see also* racism

- Pascal, Blaise, *see* existentialism  
 patriarchy 121  
 Pavlov, Ivan Petrovich, *see* psychology  
 Perkins, Charles, *see* Aborigine  
 Persian, *see* Iran  
 pharaoh 4, 311  
 Philo Judaeus 134  
 philosophy 10, 23, 43, 46, 79, 155,  
 165, 212–13, 320, 337, 343, 351, 354  
 natural sciences 10, 214  
 Paul Karl Feyerabend 213  
 scientific relativism 213  
 philosophers 10, 23–24, 43, 51, 99,  
 213, 337, 354  
 philosophy of science 213, 354  
 physical sciences 214  
 social science 89, 214, 243, 354  
 Thomas S. Kuhn 213  
 sociology of science 213  
 Plato 99  
*The Republic* 99, 320  
 political correctness (PC) 121  
 Popper, Karl Raimund 213, 354  
*Conjectures and Refutations* 354  
 falsificationism 354  
*Objective Knowledge* 354  
*The Logic of Scientific Discovery* 354  
*The Poverty of Historicism* 354  
*see also* philosophy  
 pornography 147–52, 157, 294  
 Adam Glasser 295  
 D.H. Lawrence 150  
*Lady Chatterley's Lover* 150  
 erotica 151, 180  
 Henry Miller 150  
*Tropic of Cancer* 150  
*Tropic of Capricorn* 150  
 James Joyce 150  
*Ulysses* 150  
 John Cleland 149  
 Marquis de Sade 149  
*Memoirs v. Massachusetts* 149  
 New Right politics 151  
 pornographic 148, 151  
 promiscuity xv, 147, 151, 180,  
 305, 307  
 prostitution 147–48, 261  
 Radclyffe Hall 150  
*The Well of Loneliness* 150  
 rape 150–51  
 Restif de la Baron 149  
 Robert Maplethorpe 148  
 sexual violence 151, 287  
 Seymore Butts 295  
 Steven Hirsch 294  
 Vivid Entertainment Group 295  
 Warren Burger 149  
*Miller v. California* 149  
 poverty 200, 319–20, 324–25,  
 335, 354  
 prejudice 75, 87, 90, 111, 123  
*see also* racism  
 pride 56, 100, 105–07, 120, 188,  
 191–94, 204–05, 245, 249, 253, 274,  
 286, 290  
 false pride 56, 105–06, 193, 204–05  
*see also* Satan  
 private parts 127–28, 140–41, 159  
 genitalia 128, 141  
*see also* 'awrah, nakedness  
 Prophets (先知) v, ix, xiv, xxi–xxii, 1–4,  
 16, 49–51, 56–57, 63, 69, 131, 146,  
 153, 166, 188, 194–95, 208, 212,  
 221, 232, 245–48, 251, 253, 261–62,  
 266, 272, 279, 289, 309, 311, 320,  
 327–31, 335  
 prostrate xii, 3, 18, 25, 48, 56, 62–64  
 psychology 8, 10, 34, 72, 105, 123,  
 142, 170, 173–78, 188, 194, 199,  
 206, 214, 283, 330, 351–52  
 behaviorism 175, 177, 352  
 Behaviorist School 177  
 Ivan Petrovich Pavlov 177, 352  
*Lectures on Conditioned  
 Reflexes* 352  
 John Broadus Watson 177, 352  
 cognitive psychology 175, 177  
 psycholinguistics 177  
 extroversion 175, 351  
 individual psychology 175–76, 351  
 Alfred Adler 176–77, 351–52  
*Studie uber Minderwertigkeit von  
 Organen (Study of Organ  
 Inferiority and Its Psychological  
 Compensation)* 352  
 individuation 175–76, 351

introversion 175, 351  
*see also* Freud, Jung  
 punishment 6, 14–15, 60, 67–68,  
 133, 155, 198–99, 222, 238–39, 257,  
 263, 266–67, 272, 277–78, 301, 308,  
 327, 331

## Q

quantum physics 35, 37  
 Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle 35  
 macroscopic physics 36–37  
 Albert Einstein 36, 298  
 theory of general relativity 36  
 theory of special relativity 36  
 space-time 36  
 quantum theory 35  
 Queen of Sheba (Bilqīs) 68  
 al-Qulayb (*mushrik* burial site) 279  
 Quraysh xiv, 136, 158, 360  
 al-Ḥums 136, 158  
 Qurayshī 146

## R

racism viii, xii, xviii, 11, 74, 76,  
 84–101, 105, 108, 115, 117, 121  
 affirmative action 88, 110, 114  
 anti-racism 88  
 anti-racist 88, 94, 96, 121  
 class xiii, 12–13, 72, 87–88, 92–94,  
 97, 101, 103, 108, 115, 122, 136,  
 140, 153, 161, 163, 172–73, 179,  
 182, 217, 222, 243, 248–49, 287,  
 306, 314–16, 326, 331, 340, 345  
 diversity 82, 86, 92, 116, 119, 287  
 environmental racism 115  
 immigration 87, 90, 91, 96, 104, 111  
 migrant workers 95  
 intelligence xiv, 44, 116–17, 131,  
 231, 342  
 intelligence and race 117  
 minority xvi, 81, 87–88, 91–92,  
 95–97, 110, 115, 118–20, 295  
 multiracial/biracial 119  
 biracialism 119  
 multiracialism 120  
 pluralism 86, 92, 120, 151

race 13, 76, 84–98, 105, 108–14,  
 117, 119, 161, 242, 246, 248, 252,  
 269, 281, 287, 300, 326, 335  
 idea of race 85  
 race consciousness 90  
 race relations 85–92, 96  
 racial 10, 12, 85–98, 108,  
 111–19, 123, 255, 333, 344  
 racial discrimination 108, 114  
 racial integration 86  
 racialism 85, 108  
 racialization 95–96  
 racist xii, 76, 85–88, 93–97, 108,  
 114, 117, 118, 121  
 racist ideologies 96–98  
 racists 10, 88–89, 123  
 segregation 90–92, 111  
 stereotypes 88, 93  
 structural racism 88  
 superiority 17, 85, 86, 91, 108,  
 123–24, 244, 247–49, 276  
 Ragaz, Leonhard, *see* economics  
 rain(s) ix, 224–30, 240, 251, 254, 258,  
 270, 280, 308, 359  
 convective rainfall 226–27  
 frontal rainfall 226  
 orographic rainfall 226–27  
 Rauschenbusch, Walter, *see* economics  
 Reagan, Ronald (US president)  
 151, 185  
*see also* Jew, pornography  
 Reformation, *see* Christianity  
 Reich, Robert xvii  
 religion(s) 11, 43, 46–47, 71–72,  
 78–82, 89, 108, 119, 133, 143, 147,  
 153, 156, 165, 173–74, 193, 246–47,  
 257, 261, 268, 273–74, 303, 317,  
 336, 344  
 Friedrich Max Muller 246  
*see also* theology  
 Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn  
 84, 341  
 Saski van Ulenburgh 341  
*The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes  
 Tulp* 341  
*The Night Watch* 341  
*see also* racism  
 Renaissance, *see* Europe

resurrection xiv, 1–3, 21, 106, 129,  
139, 157–58, 170, 198, 228, 272, 282  
revelation(s) xi, 3, 9, 26, 43–46,  
49–50, 53, 56–57, 102, 131, 145,  
177, 193, 212, 233, 246, 252, 256,  
262, 319, 343, 361  
revenge 106  
Rex, John 92  
    *Race Relations in Sociological  
    Theory* 92  
    see also racism  
River, Jose Antonio Primo de,  
    see fascism  
Robinson, Cedric 94  
    *Black Marxism* 94  
    see also racism  
Roman 22, 71, 114, 179, 284, 341  
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 77, 99  
    see also fascism, nationalism  
Russians 82

## S

Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ 358  
Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah 207, 353  
Ṣafiyah bint Ḥuyayy, Umm  
    al-Mu'minin 346  
Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab 359  
Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) ix, xiv, 4, 239, 245,  
    272–79, 310–13, 361  
    earthquake 239, 241, 273, 313, 361  
    Madā'in Ṣāliḥ 361  
    she-camel ix, 239, 272,  
    275–77, 361  
    Thamūd ix, 239, 272–78, 361  
    Nabateans 361  
    Petra 361  
    thunderbolt 277–78, 361  
Sartre, Jean-Paul, see existentialism  
Satan viii, xii–xiii, 3, 18, 21, 65, 67,  
    70–73, 124–33, 136–37, 140–46,  
    156–57, 195–98, 201, 208, 232,  
    244–45, 250, 265, 328  
Devil, the 145  
    ahuras 145  
    Beelzebub 145  
    Belial 145  
    Lucifer 133

    satanic xiii, 12, 126, 137, 144–46  
    see also Adam (ﷺ), jinn  
Saudi Arabia 330  
Savio, Mario, see baby boomers  
Schorer, J.A., see homosexuality  
science 21, 28, 34, 37, 42, 46, 85, 89,  
    130, 213–14, 218, 232, 242–43, 261,  
    297–99, 342–43, 351, 354  
    astrophysics 28, 218  
    spectrographs 218  
    physics 34–37, 42, 213–14  
    scientia 213  
    Scientific Revolution 213  
    see also materialism, philosophy  
secular viii, 41, 79, 82, 84, 89, 130,  
    141, 144, 147, 166, 203, 216,  
    228–29, 247, 315, 319  
    secularization 82  
Semitic, see anti-Semitism  
Senghor, Leopold, see negritude  
sex xv, 121, 147–48, 152–54, 171–74,  
    180, 186, 222, 261, 282–86, 299,  
    302, 306, 308, 346, 362  
sexuality 154, 173–74, 283, 286, 288,  
    295, 299  
    lust 240, 280, 283  
    sexism 121  
    sexual intercourse 280, 296  
    orgasm 281, 283  
    sexually transmitted diseases  
    (STDs) xv  
    sexual perversion(s) xv, 157, 280,  
    283, 289, 295  
    sexual promiscuity xv  
    see also gender, homosexuality  
Shāfi'i (Islamic school of law) 141  
al-Shām 1, 273  
shame xiii, 127–28, 153, 197, 278,  
    305, 326  
    see also nakedness, Satan  
Shapley, Harlow, see Milky Way  
Sharik ibn Ṭarīf (narrator of  
    hadiths) 353  
Shaybah ibn Rabī'ah 279  
she-camel, see Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ)  
Shu'ayb (ﷺ) ix, xiv, xvi, 4, 240–41,  
    245, 249–50, 309–19, 326–31,  
    335–36

- Aṣḥāb al-Aykaḥ (the People of the  
 Timberland) 313, 327  
 fair trade 313, 334  
 financial transactions 311  
 globalization 334  
 Ma'ān 311  
 Madyan 240, 309–13, 327  
 Occasion of Zūllāḥ 314  
 skinheads 121  
 slavery 89–90, 93, 114, 117, 122  
   *see also* racism  
 Smith, Adam, *see* economics  
 Smith, Charles Hamilton,  
   *see* hereditarianism  
 socialism 101, 103, 321, 324–25  
 socialist 121, 296, 321–22, 325  
   *see also* Marxism  
 Solar System 18, 212  
 South Africa iv, 89–93, 98, 111, 113,  
   160, 342  
   apartheid 91, 95, 99, 111, 306  
   *see also* racism  
 Soviet Union 11, 81  
   Stalin 102–03, 345  
   kulaks 103, 345  
   de-kulakization 345  
 Spain 83, 100, 154  
 Spivak, Gayatri 98  
   *In Other Worlds* 98  
   *see also* culture, racism  
 St. Augustine, *see* creationism  
 St. Francis of Assisi, *see* theology  
 St. Paul, *see* Christianity  
 St. Thomas Aquinas, *see* creationism  
 Stalin, Joseph, *see* Soviet Union  
 stars 160, 208–11, 214–19, 246, 251,  
   295, 354–56  
   *see also* Milky Way, universe  
 Sun, the 4, 18, 208–11, 214–19, 223,  
   251, 354–57  
 Szalasi, Ferencz, *see* fascism
- T**  
 al-Ṭabarī (Islamic historian) 141  
 Tabūk 273  
 Ṭalḥāḥ ibn 'Ubaydillāḥ 202
- Talmud, *see* Judaism  
 Ṭāwūs ibn Kaysān 358  
 technology 15, 46, 81, 83, 143,  
   214, 278  
 theism 31  
 theology 37, 43–48, 135, 249, 320–22,  
   338–42, 346, 359, 362–63  
   Alfred North Whitehead 46  
   anthropocentrism 47  
   Docetic controversy 322  
   natural theology 37, 43, 44, 46  
   Pierre Teilhard de Chardin 46  
   Process Theology 46  
   St. Francis of Assisi 47  
   theological 28, 29, 31, 47, 132, 318,  
   319, 321, 322, 323, 324, 337  
   theology of nature 47  
   *see also* philosophy  
 Third World 122  
 Thomas, L.V., *see* negritude  
 throne, *see* Allah (ﷻ)  
 al-Tirmidhī (compiler of hadiths) 255,  
   339–40, 346, 353, 359  
 Tracy, Destutt de, *see* ideology  
 Tree of Knowledge, *see* Adam (ﷺ)  
 Trump, Donald (US president) 99,  
   104, 294  
   *see also* fascism, racism  
 truth, the xiv, xix, 12, 16, 28, 43–45,  
   52, 58, 60, 74, 84, 170, 188, 192–93,  
   197, 201–02, 206, 213, 238–43,  
   246–50, 253, 257–60, 263, 266, 268,  
   272, 290, 309–10, 336
- U**  
 Ulrichs, C.H., *see* homosexuality  
 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb 51–52, 224,  
   279, 339  
 Unamuno, Miguel de, *see* existentialism  
 underclass 92, 122, 274  
   Burakumin 123  
   ghetto blacks 123  
   gypsies 123  
   untouchables 123  
   *see also* racism  
 United Nations (UN) 83, 122,  
   230, 287

- World Health Organization (WHO) 287  
*International Classification of Diseases* 287
- United States xvi–xvii, 89–99, 104, 110–14, 117–23, 149, 161, 164, 167, 180, 185, 258, 270, 288–90, 294, 334, 358  
 Wall Street 140, 304
- universe, the viii, 22–23, 27–32, 35–39, 42, 130, 208–09, 214–16, 357
- ‘Urwaḥ ibn al-Zubayr (Islamic historian) 347
- usury 320, 334
- ‘Utbaḥ ibn Rabī‘ah 279
- ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān 202
- Utilitarianism 155  
 Jeremy Bentham xvii, 155  
 John Stuart Mill xvii, 155  
 panopticon 155  
*see also* philosophy
- V**
- vegetation 4, 208, 211, 224, 231, 251
- Vietnam 304, 306
- Vogt, Karl, *see* hereditarianism
- W**
- Wall Street, *see* United States
- Wallace, Alfred Russel, *see* evolution
- Washington, Booker T. 343  
*see also* racism
- water 18, 166–67, 177, 187, 193, 205, 207, 210, 224–27, 230–31, 251, 255, 257, 270, 275–77, 281, 314, 318  
*see also* greenhouse effect, rain, wind
- Watson, John Broadus, *see* psychology
- wealth xi, xiv, xvi, xviii–xix, 140, 160, 181–83, 193, 196, 204–05, 241, 314–21, 325, 332, 335
- West, the 33, 82, 85, 89, 103, 111, 113, 117, 122, 151, 153, 166, 225, 247, 271, 284, 286, 306–08, 320–21, 340–42, 362
- Western iv, xvii, 33, 43, 80–81, 83, 89, 91, 94, 98, 120, 123, 164, 178–79, 227, 246, 261, 286, 289–90, 295, 303, 306, 319, 321, 325, 342, 344, 361
- Westernization 178  
*see also* Europe, imperialism, secular, United States
- white flight 123  
 contact hypothesis 123  
*see also* racism
- Whitehead, Alfred North, *see* theology
- Wilson, William Julius 88, 92  
*The Declining Significance of Race* 88  
*see also* racism
- wind(s) ix, 2, 64, 68, 154, 159, 202, 208, 210, 212, 224–29, 251, 268–71, 330  
 cold winds 225  
   bise 225  
   mistral 225  
 monsoons 224  
 trade winds 224–25  
   doldrums 224–25  
 warm winds 225  
   chinook 225  
   fohn 226  
   Santa Ana 226  
   sharav 226  
   sirocco 226  
 westerlies 224–25
- Windsor, Edith 291  
*see also* homosexuality, Jew
- woman xiii, 134, 152, 158, 174, 179, 281–83, 288, 345  
 women xiii, xvii, 65, 81, 112, 114, 136, 143, 146, 150–53, 158–67, 178–81, 240, 259–61, 280–93, 297, 301–05, 344–45, 350, 360
- World Health Organization (WHO), *see* United Nations
- World War I (WWI) 99–100, 117–18, 241
- World War II (WWII) 99–104, 241, 285, 304
- Worth, Charles, *see* fashion



**X**

xenophobia 123  
*see also* racism

**Y**

Yahweh, *see* Judaism  
Yemen 255, 264  
Ḥaḍramawt 264  
Yūsuf (يوسف) 311

**Z**

Zāhirī (Islamic school of law) 141  
Zakariyā (زكريا) 221  
Zionism 9, 77, 99, 143, 331  
  Zionist 260, 293, 353  
  Zionists xiii, 261  
  *see also* Jew, imperialism, Israel,  
  racism, Yahūd  
al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām 202  
Zweig, Stefan, *see* homosexuality



# Index of Arabic Words

## A

- ‘Ād, *see* Hūd (ﷻ)  
*ākhirah* xii, 203, 208  
*‘alaqah* 60  
*alif* 6–7  
*āmin* xix, 223  
*al-a‘rāf* xiv, 1–6, 21, 139, 193, 211, 241  
*‘aṣabiyah* 283  
*see also* gender, homosexuality  
Aṣḥāb al-Aykah, *see* Shu‘ayb (ﷻ)  
*‘awrah* 141, 159  
*see also* beauty, clothing

## B

- Badr, Battle of 224, 279  
Banū Isrā‘il xi  
*see also* Children of Israel, Israel,  
Jew, Yahūd, Zionism  
al-Baṣrah, *see* Iraq

## D

- da‘wah* 9, 247  
*dā‘i* 247

- Dhū al-Ḥijjah (Islamic month) 347  
*dīn* 8–9, 11, 49, 52, 136, 206,  
311–12, 316  
*du‘ā’* viii, 220–24, 359  
*dunyā* xii, 140

## F

- fāḥishah* 154, 282  
*fawāḥish* 170  
*fahshā’* 147  
*faqīhs* 141  
*fawāḥish*, *see* *fāḥishah*  
*fitnah* 259

## G

- ghaybī* 48

## H

- hadith* 51, 56, 58, 60, 63, 124, 169,  
201, 207, 221, 223, 255, 279, 339,  
346, 347, 353  
*muttafaqun ‘alayhi* 339

Ḥaḍramawt, *see* Yemen

Hajj 158

*ḥalāl* 125, 339

*ḥarām* 169

Ḥawwā' (ﷺ) xiii, 144

*see also* Eve (ﷺ)

al-Hijāz 208, 273, 311

Hijrah, the xi

*hijrī* 273

*ḥilf* 99

Hūd (ﷺ) ix, xiv, 4, 238, 245, 263–73, 310–13, 360

ʿĀd (ancient Arabian tribe) ix, 238–39, 263–73, 276, 360

## I

*ʿibādah* 220

*ʿibādullāh* 130

*uʿbudū* 252

Iblīs viii, xii–xiii, 3, 18, 20, 25–26, 48, 62–66, 74–76, 84, 85, 105–08, 123–26, 140, 198, 243

Iblīsī 76, 175

*see also* Satan

Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) 53, 264, 273, 279, 311

*see also* Abraham (ﷺ)

*ifsād* 221

*iḥsān* 52

*ijtihād* 141

*imān* 49, 52, 187, 204, 232, 313

*iqraʿ* 8

*isrāf* 169, 282

*see also* extravagance

*isrāʿīliyyāt* 124

*ithm* 170

## J

*jāhiliyyah* 9, 11, 159, 172–75, 260

*jāhili* 10–11, 172, 186

*jamal* 199

Jibril (ﷺ) 51, 53, 56

Rūḥ al-Qudus 57

Rūḥ, the 55

*see also* angel, Gabriel (ﷺ)

jihād 9

jinn viii, xii, 51, 62–71, 74, 142, 145, 197–98, 202

*ghawl* 70

*ʿifrit* 70

## K

Kaʿbaḥ 136, 146, 158–59, 171

*see also* Hajj, Makkah, *masjid*

*kāfir*, *see* *kufr*

*khalīfah* xii, xviii, 125, 129, 131

*see also* Adam (ﷺ)

*khaṭīb al-ambiyāʿ*, *see* Shuʿayb (ﷺ)

*khalīfah* 244, 280

al-Kūfah, *see* Iraq

*kufr* 65, 105, 203, 261, 313

*kāfir(s)* 49, 55–56, 197, 327

*kutlah* 99

*see also* fascism

## L

*lām* 6–7, 127

Lūṭ (ﷺ) ix, xiv, 4, 53–54, 245, 259, 279–82, 307, 310–13

*see also* homosexuality, Lot (ﷺ)

## M

Maʿān, *see* Shuʿayb (ﷺ)

Madāʿin Ṣāliḥ, *see* Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ)

Madinah xi, 1, 361

Madyan, *see* Shuʿayb (ﷺ)

Makkah xi, xiv, 1, 136, 208

Makkan 194

Miná 159, 347

al-Muzdalifah 347

*malakayn* 127

*malikayn* 127

*marḥūmūn* v

Maryam (ﷺ) 53

*see also* Mary (ﷺ)

*masjid* 11, 159

*mīm* 6–7

Miná, *see* Makkah

*mudḡahā* 60

*mufassir*, *see* *tafsir*

*muhajjabāt* 301  
 Muhammad (ﷺ) v, xxi, 6, 9, 12, 50,  
 52, 57, 69, 136, 147, 158, 194, 245,  
 260, 274, 279, 360  
 Rasūl-Allāh (ﷺ) xxi  
 Mūsá (ﷺ) xi, xiv, 4, 245, 311  
*see also* Moses (ﷺ)  
*mushriks*, *see shirk*  
*muttafaqun 'alayhi*, *see* hadith  
*muttaqī*, *see taqwá*  
 al-Muzdalifah, *see* Makkah

## N

*nafkhaḥ* 232  
*see also rūḥ*  
*nafs* 280  
 Nasr 256–57  
*see also* idols  
*nifāq* 49  
*nikāḥ* xv  
*see also* marriage  
 Nuḥ (ﷺ) ix, xiv, 4, 233, 238, 245,  
 251–66, 272–73, 310–13  
 Jabal al-Jūdīy 257  
 Mt. Jūdīy 258  
*see also* Noah (ﷺ)  
*nuṭufah* 60

## Q

Qābil and Hābil 135  
*see also* Cain and Abel  
*qadar* xviii  
*qiblah* 223–24  
*qirā'ah* 345  
*qisṭ* 157  
*see also* justice  
 Quraysh xiv, 136, 158, 360  
 al-Ḥums 136, 158  
 Qurayshī 146  
*see also* elites, *jāhiliyah*, *shirk*

## R

*rabb al-'alamīn* 246  
*rajfah* 313  
*see also* earthquake, *Shu'ayb* (ﷺ)

Ramaḍān (Islamic month) 52  
 Rasūl-Allāh (ﷺ), *see* Muhammad (ﷺ)  
*risālāh* 3  
*rūḥ* 61  
 Rūḥ al-Qudus, *see* Jibrīl (ﷺ)

## S

*ṣād* 7  
*ṣaḥīḥ* 124  
*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *see* al-Bukhārī  
*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *see* Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj  
*ṣalāh* 223, 312  
*Ṣalāh al-Istisqā'* 359  
 Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) ix, xiv, 4, 239, 245,  
 272–79, 310–13, 361  
 Madā'in Ṣāliḥ 361  
 Thamūd ix, 239, 272–78, 361  
 Yawm al-Arbi'ā' 361  
 Yawm al-Sabt 277, 361  
*ṣāliḥūn* v  
 Shāfi'ī (Islamic school of law) 141  
 al-Shām 1, 273  
*shar'ī* 141  
*shirk* 15, 17, 171, 187  
*mushriks* 171, 224, 255, 260, 279  
 Shu'ayb (ﷺ) ix, xiv, xvi, 4, 240–41,  
 245, 249–50, 309–19, 326–31,  
 335–36  
 Aṣḥāb al-Aykāḥ (the People of the  
 Timberland) 313, 327  
*khaṭīb al-anbiyā'* 311  
 Ma'ān 311  
 Madyan 240, 309–13, 327  
 Yawm al-Ḥullāh 314  
*shuhadā'* v  
*ṣiddiqūn* v  
*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm* 108  
*sittati ayyām* 212  
*see also* day  
 Sulaymān (ﷺ) 68–69  
*summah* 282, 331  
*sunan* 125, 271, 339, 358  
*see also* law (social)  
*sūrah(s)* xi–xii, xiv–xv, xviii, 1–4, 7–8,  
 49, 106, 124, 188, 208, 272, 279,  
 282, 336  
*al-Mu'awwidhatayn* 336

*Sūrahs al-Falaq and al-Nās* 336  
*Sūrah al-Aḥzāb* v  
*Sūrah al-An'ām* 1, 2  
*Sūrah al-A'rāf* vii, xi–xii, xvi, 1,  
 48, 256  
*Sūrah al-Baqarah* 3, 48–49  
*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* 1, 223, 339  
*Sūrah al-Ḥijr* 48, 273, 275  
*Sūrah Hūd* 252, 256  
*Sūrah al-Isrā'* 48  
*Sūrah al-Kahf* 48, 62  
*Sūrah al-Muddaththir* 339  
*Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* 256  
*Sūrah Nūḥ* 256  
*Sūrah al-Qamar* 256  
*Sūrah Ṣād* 6, 48  
*Sūrah al-Shu'arā'* 256  
*Sūrah Ṭā-Ha* 48  
 Suwā' 256–57  
*see also* idols

## T

*tablīgh* 247  
 Tabūk 273  
*tafsīr(s)* iv–v, xii, xviii–xix, xxi, 63,  
 132, 255, 264, 274, 289, 339, 347,  
 351, 353, 359–61  
*mufasssīr(s)* xviii, 311, 313  
*tāghūt* 248, 328, 330  
*tāghūti* 249  
*tāhir* 223  
*taqwā* viii, 136, 140, 188  
*muttaqī* xiii  
*tawāf* 136  
*tawḥīd* xi, 3, 247  
 Thamūd, *see* Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ)  
*thawāb* 358

## U

*u'budū*, *see* 'ibādah  
 Ummah xi  
 'Umrah 158  
*see also* Hajj, Makkah  
 'uṣṣabah 99  
*see also* fascism

## W

*wahy* 3  
*walī* 146  
*waṣīy* 135  
 Wadd 256–57  
*see also* idols

## Y

Yaghūth 256–57  
*see also* idols  
 Yahūd 186, 289  
 Yahūdī 180, 186  
*see also* Banū Isrā'īl, Israel, Jew,  
 racism, Zionism  
 Ya'ūq 256–57  
*see also* idols  
 Yawm al-Arbi'ā', *see* Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ)  
 Yawm al-Sabt, *see* Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ)  
 Yawm al-Waqt al-Ma'lūm 106  
 Yawm al-Zullah, *see* Shu'ayb (ﷺ)  
 Yūsuf (ﷺ) 311

## Z

*zabāniyah* 59–60  
*see also* angel  
 Zāhiri (Islamic school of law) 141  
*zakāh* 52, 222  
 Zakariyā (ﷺ) 221  
*zuhd* 339, 358

# Notes

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